NICANOR LORETI

Cult People

Tales from Hollywood's Exploitation A-list

Including interviews with: Wes Craven, Dario Argento, George A. Romero, Ted Raimi, James Gunn, Albert Pyun, Lance Henriksen, Billy Drago, HG Lewis, David Carradine, Michael Rooker and more!

FOREWORD BY ALBERT PYUN

HEADPRESS

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Guadalupe,
the sweetest, prettiest girl on earth.

Acnowledgements

This book wouldn't have been possible without the inspiration of Steve Puchalski, Michael Weldon and Anthony Timpone. I'd also like to thank Diane O'Bannon, Ruth Bornhauser, Damian & Julio, Niko "Viyano", the staff of La Cosa, Pablo and Ximena, my whole family and especially my best friend Matías. I wrote all of this (well, most of it at least) listening to the grooviest band on the planet, Los Natas.

About the author

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Nicanor Loreti is a journalist and filmmaker. As a journalist, Nicanor has contributed to *Fangoria*, *Shock Cinema* and others, and is internationally known for his interviews and articles. He has also made several short films, among them the James Gunn produced *El Kuervo* and a documentary about the Argentinian cult rock band Hermetica called *La H*. Nicanor is due to shoot his film *Diablo*, which won the "Best Screenplay by a Newcomer" Prize awarded by Argentina's Film Institute. He lives in Buenos Aires with his girlfriend Guadalupe and their cat Agatha.

FOREWORD

BY LLOYD KAUFMAN & GABE FRIEDMAN

WELCOME TO THIS excellent book about the world of cult film and exploitation. Mind you, I haven't read it, but I'm sure it's great because it got published, but then again three of my books have been published and the *LA Times*, my co-workers, and my wife all say that they suck, so you be the judge and buy them at Borders, Barnes and Nobles, Amazon. com, and Troma. com. Hey! How's that for exploitation, huh?!!

Before I get too forward with my foreword, let me go backwards and speculate on why I was asked to write this foreword (I wish I could think of a synonym for foreword, damn it). My career started off at Yale University with promise, much like my Yale colleague and childhood friend, Oliver Stone. But somewhere along the lines, our careers took drastic turns.

While he went on to make critically acclaimed, award winning films that dealt with such hot button topics as men being brutally blown to bits in war, the perils of drug abuse, a celebration of America's fascination with sex and violence, and the glorification of a grotesque icon, somewhere I went wrong. I made critically maligned "cult/exploitation" films graphically embracing such offensive subjects as men being brutally blown to bits in war, the perils of drug abuse, a celebration of America's fascination with sex and violence, and the glorification of a grotesque icon. Holy Shit! Wait a minute…Why isn't Oliver Stone writing this foreword? He does the same shit as I do!—Oh yeah, he's mainstream and isn't into exploitation, whereas I'm a "cult/exploitation" filmmaker.

At least that's what I've been fucking labeled for the past thirty five years. To me, being referred to as an "exploitation filmmaker" is a lot like being called a "nigger." Sure I have a gigantic penis and possess great dance moves…but don't all filmmakers?

So the question that I have is, why are the good folks in this book called "cult/exploitation" filmmakers, and Oliver Stone, Stephen Spielberg, and Garry Marshall are worshipped as highly respected, critically acclaimed, mainstream, award-winning geniuses? Are my peers and I in this book labeled "cult" because we have rabid followers who will do whatever we ask? Are we Charles Mansons with celluloid? If so, then why can't I get a decent bag of weed and/or group sex from nubile hippie chicks? And why are we singled out as "exploitation" filmmakers? Oh, now I'm beginning to get it. The media defines exploitation as "making a profit off of something deplorable." For example, two and a half hours of graphic Nazi violence, or watching 3,000 innocent people perish in a couple of towering infernos, or the Cinderella story of a cock-loving, cum dumpster who provides true love to rich men—now I'm getting it. That's exploitation. But, hold your horses partner, that sounds a lot like Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, Stone's *World Trade Center*, and Marshall's *Pretty Woman*!

But these are not "cult/exploitation" movies; these are beloved mainstream movies. So what is the difference between them and us? What is the difference between the hideously deformed icon in Oliver Stone's *Nixon* and in the *The Toxic Avenger*? *Pretty Woman* suggests that a street prostitute can give you real, true love, but the only thing that I ever got from a street whore was syphilis. Who's doing the exploiting?

The only difference that I can see is that cult directors don't have the money to spend on big stars, big budgets, press agents, and kabillion dollar advertising campaigns, whereas the sky is the limit for Michael Bay's *Armageddon* (that's big budget exploitation at its finest: a filmmaker who takes a public fear and turns it into a popcorn flick)!

A cult film is the inexplicable success of something that is not rammed down your throat, but it gets publicity from people who have found it, enjoyed it, and passed it on. It's viral. It's the type of sickness that can't be generated in the sterile environment of the corporate conglomerate

machine. It builds and builds until it becomes a phenomenon; then corporate automatons label it "cult."

So if they marginalise us as cult, then what are they? Allow me to theorise about them: I'm no theologian, but the fact of the matter is that about five companies own or control about ninety five per cent of the entertainment industry. Admittedly some good stuff is produced, but in my opinion, ninety five per cent of that mainstream stuff is fast food shit. The majority of us know that the product ain't good for you, but it's everywhere and it's cheap; and kabillions of dollars are spent to convince us to consume. When you are bombarded with such hype and when the owners of said product also own the tv stations, newspapers, etc. , then you can't help but be brainwashed into going to see it. In the summer of 2006, the mainstream even tried to buy and brainwash its way into the cult movie goer's wallet. They thought that they could manufacture a genuine cult hit with the mega-budget *Snakes on a Plane*. Yes, it created lots of chatter on the internet, but it failed because it sucked. A goofy title and a megastar like Samuel Jackson may guarantee a good internet joke, but certainly not a long-lasting, popular cult film. It just ain't that easy. So if they call us cult then we should call them brainwashers. Cult films may not be any healthier than a Big Mac, but they are made with natural ingredients and with heart, as opposed to being mass-produced in a gigantic corporate factory. Our films are something you might not like, but you want to try at least once…sort of like homosexuality, which I've experimented with fourteen times and still don't know if I like it or not. I'm trying it again tonight.

Getting back to the exploration, I mean exploitation; all films exploit something. That's the nature of filmmaking. Even the greatest visual artist of our era, Stan Brakhage, exploited his wife giving birth on film in *The Art of Vision*.

What makes the "exploitation" folks you'll meet in this book unique is that they all have great talent to be able to do so much with so little. What makes the folks in this book stand out is that they have created or helped create art that has withstood the test of time all without the Hollywood brainwash system. Romero's low budget masterpiece, *Dawn of the Dead*, is indelibly burned into our minds, while the $100,000,000 mindless

mainstream blockbuster *Independence Day* is forgotten (except for the fact that American audiences applauded during the scene depicting the World Trade Center being blown up by aliens, but five years later were brought to tears when the same buildings were blown up by illegal aliens in Stone's *World Trade Center*).

So I guess what defines the "cult/exploitation" gang who appear in this book is that our tremendous and unique talent transcends narrow categories and labels. Our work, by dint of great word of mouth, is loved and respected by generations around the world…not only that, but just look at all the movies discussed in this book that are being re-made with big stars and big budgets. In fact, half of the people in this book were once cult filmmakers like I still am, and have now become members of the mainstream filmmaking world. Maybe they will be a good influence on the industry and make some quality fast food! See, I am an optimist, after all!

So, I guess it's a good thing to be a cult filmmaker. I know that I'll never be as successful as Spielberg or Stone, but I know that I will always have fans that care about my "exploitation" films and will go to the ends of the world to seek them out! What better proof of all this than being read about in a far away country in which my films have practically no distribution…Argentina! *Quel honneur*!

INTRODUCTION
BY ALBERT PYUN

NICANOR LORETI burst into my consciousness in the spring of 2005. He said he was a young writer from Argentina doing a book on his favourite cult film directors and actors. And that he wished to interview me because I had managed a career working outside the Hollywood mainstream. The first thought that came to mind was — *why in the world would he want to interview me?* Didn't he understand who I was? The most 'vilified' filmmaker in recorded history (or at least of the past twenty five years).

But Mr Loreti was determined. It was apparent he had a great knowledge of cinema and filmmaking and that he had a real love for the cult genres I live in. His interview was really the first one I had done in years and, frankly, one of the few I've ever done. I've always had distaste for publicity and in discussing my work. But Mr Loreti changed that by his enthusiasm and remarkable knowledge.

As we exchanged letters, a remarkable thing occurred. Nikki (as I came to know him) taught me a new appreciation of my own films in ways I never thought possible. I realised that much of what I tried to achieve with this crazy vision of mine, had somehow gotten across the divide. Where I had thought I was making these films in a vacuum, Nikki reminded me that, through the years, they were appreciated. And it was rather surprising to me that there was an audience, albeit a slightly nutty one, that sincerely enjoyed the experience of An Albert Pyun Film.

Nikki also brought back memories of my own love and interest in cult films when I was growing up. I remembered the hot clammy theatres

where these films unspooled. The boxy sound, the sticky floor and dim projection lamps. George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*…Dario Argento's *Suspiria*, Wes Craven and Peter Locke's *The Hills Have Eyes*. I saw all First Run…in THEATRES! It was fabulous. I remember one of the first film magazines I ever bought was on *Night of the Living Dead*. It was an inspiring time for me (although the makers of these films may groan at the thought they created me).

I owe Nikki for reminding me of my roots and why I had a need to make films — these types of films. Sometimes, after years of budget battles and creative disappointments, you lose your way as a filmmaker (if I can be so bold to call myself that).

I think by opening my eyes to see my audience and fans changed the course of my latest film *Infection*. Nikki showed me that I had a responsibility to that faithful and ever adventurous audience.

Nikki and his book have reinvigorated my excitement for making movies…movies like the ones in his book that give us all so much pleasure.

Nikki's book contains his enthusiasm and insight and will immerse the reader in the wonderful, if somewhat quirky world of cult cinema. And provide a greater understanding of how and why these films came to life and the unorthodox vision behind each one of these amazing films (mine excluded!).

Thank you Nikki.

DAVID CARRADINE

PROBABLY EVERYONE HAS a favourite David Carradine movie. Some people like the Roger Corman production *Death Race 2000* the most, others prefer artsy stuff like Bergman's *The Serpent's Egg*, others dig kung fu flicks like *Lone Wolf McQuade*, but you won't find anybody who hasn't seen him on either the big screen or the tv (probably in the classic series *Kung fu*). David was one of many acting brothers (Keith, Robert), all of whom followed the steps of their father, John Carradine. But it was David who became the true American icon. He worked with some of the world's most influential directors, directed films himself, and had no regrets. Working for Roger Corman taught him everything he had to know about the business, and after that, there was nothing that could beat him.

David Carradine clearly proved his worth in *Kill Bill*, the two volume film directed by Quentin Tarantino. In *Vol. 1*, you only hear his voice and never see his face — yet it's enough to light up the screen… In *Vol. 2*, you get to see David in all his glory, and in my humble opinion that alone makes for a much better film. If you're a fan, I would also recommend the little-seen gem *The Monster Hunter* (aka *Natural Selection*), where he played an odd FBI agent who can see demons.

I did this interview just before *Kill Bill* opened and was happy to hear back from, in his own words, "a fucking legend" — not that I disagree. Sadly, he passed away in 2008, which was shocking news for any cult movie fan. However, personal favourites like *Lone Wolf McQuade* and *Kill Bill: Vol. 2* will live forever and keep the legend alive.

NICANOR LORETI *What was it like working with Martin Scorsese and Barbara Hershey in* Boxcar Bertha*?*
DAVID CARRADINE Well, Barbara and I were in love, and Marty was the new kid in town: fresh, bright, nervous as hell. It was a wonderful shoot. Marty and I got along like blood brothers. We had a lot of laughs. Marty had a hard time staying in control of the picture. He had to fire a couple of cameramen. He couldn't get his way. In the end, though, he got what he wanted. The movie we shot was a better one than what was released after Sam Arkoff's crowd had messed with it. *Mean Streets* was more quintessentially a Scorsese film, but I only had one day on the picture. We had to use Los Angeles for New York, and I could only work on Sunday, as I had started the *Kung Fu* series. An interesting sidelight: I gave Marty a copy of *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Told him if he didn't make the movie of it, he was shit. He originally cast Barbara and I in the leads, but it took so long to get it made that I had grown too old to play Jesus. Marty made a deal with the studio to direct *Casino* and in return they would finance *The Last Temptation*. I think *Casino* is one of Marty's least masterful, and *The Last Temptation…* gives him true stature, even more than *Raging Bull* and *Goodfellas*. He comes close with *Gangs of New York*. I think Marty has yet to show us his best stuff. The Bible doesn't say how old Mary Magdalene is, so Barbara got to stay in it.

And what about Ingmar Bergman in The Serpent's Egg*? How different is his style from Scorsese's?*
There's only one Bergman, as there is only one Scorsese. Marty is totally American. Down to earth. Bergman is from another planet. He was very exacting and, of course, brilliant. Deep, dark. Kind and cruel simultaneously. Easy to hate. Mostly I loved him.

You also were in the Roger Corman productions Death Race 2000 *and* Deathsport. *What do you remember about those shootings?*
I did nine pictures for the Cormans. All kinds of stories. Action pictures for Roger and character pieces for Julie. *Death Race* was a tiny action-comedy-message masterpiece, which we shot in three weeks. It rained all the time. You can't tell, because of my black vinyl costume and the high contrast

photography. My relationship with Paul Bartel was an uneasy collaboration. Simon Griffith was the most perfectly formed human being I have ever touched naked. Stallone was, well, Stallone.

Deathsport was a fiasco. Nick Nicifor had written a brilliant script, but he was a madman, quite literally, and didn't know how to direct. He quit the picture before it was over. After he attacked Claudia Jennings and was thrown down and kicked by me, his heart wasn't really in it. Some of it, though, is almost great. The final sword fight with Richard Lynch is excellent. Gary Graver's camerawork is sometimes breathtakingly beautiful. It was Claudia's last picture. We all loved her. She was a great lady, and afraid of nothing. Roger has become a real friend. He's a strange man, I guess, but he has an internal set of ethics from which he never deviates. I had a piece of *Death Race*, and he always paid off, scrupulously, unlike the big studios, which will cheat you all they can. According to Orion, *Lone Wolf McQuade* is still not in profit. Steve Carver, the director, and Yoram Ben Ami, the producer, both very nice, honest guys, have been in court with Orion for years. They've never seen any money. Roger certainly understands his audience, and he has made an enormous contribution in starting out great talents: dozens of them. He rarely visits the set. On each of the films I did with him, he would drop by once to compliment my performance, and over the years he's given me good advice. I didn't always take it, as when he offered to let me out of my contract for *Deathsport*. I was fascinated by the material. He was right, though. I got one review, in the *Hollywood Reporter*, which read, "Don't let the fact that David Carradine is terrific in this movie talk you into going to see it, as it's the one of worst movies ever made."

You starred in The Warrior and the Sorceress*, another Corman production that was shot here in Argentina. What do you remember about the country and Maria Socas, your Argentinean co-star?*

This was another troubled production. I broke my hand on the third day — you can't tell in the movie. I built a black leather gauntlet with studs over the cast. But the director was unable to handle the tough schedule. You don't go a week over on a Corman picture. Roger was furious. I didn't see much of Argentina: I was working too hard. Maria was very sweet. She never had any clothes on in the movie. Strange, considering it was pretty much a movie for

kids. Roger didn't want her Argentine accent. He had her entire performance dubbed over in LA. Which was a pity; it was actually very effective.

The Long Riders *had a very odd casting, consisting mainly of brothers.*
Odd? No. It was the forerunner of the brother movies of the various rat packs — that was the whole idea: the point of it. Brothers playing brothers. James and Stacy Keach thought up the idea, and my brother Bobby delivered the Carradines. I had worked with Randy Quaid in *Bound for Glory*, and knew he had a little brother. Christopher and Nicolas Guest we found at the last minute.

That movie was directed by Walter Hill. How did you two get along?
Walter and I are buddies. He was my absolute favourite of all the directors I've worked with until I met Tarantino. We have always planned to work together again.

You were Chuck Norris' nemesis in Lone Wolf McQuade. *That's one of Chuck's best films.*
Yes, it is the best of Chuck's films. I like the picture, and I like my work in it OK. I took on the movie essentially as a favour for Steve Carver, who had directed me in *Fast Charlie. . . the Moonbeam Rider*. I didn't expect too much from it. I was pleasantly surprised, and Steve has turned out to be a lifelong friend. I've done four pictures with him, and we're planning another. The final fight in the movie is super, very real; the hits look as though they make serious contact, like a heavyweight prize fight on tv. And the juxtaposition of the two disparate styles is beautiful. It's also as close as Chuck ever got to giving a real acting performance. I got good reviews for my acting. Pretty much all I did, though, was smoke cigars and kick people.

What do you think about the Kung Fu *series making you an icon among martial arts movie fans? Did you ever expect that?*
No, I didn't expect it. I just thought it was a very great part, ideally suited for me. The explosion was a surprise to me. After the small following that my previous series *Shane* had attracted, I was not about to embrace any extravagant hopes.

Did you ever get to meet Bruce Lee, whom you replaced in the role?
I don't understand "replaced." Bruce was never offered the part. No, I never met him.

Are there any movies you wish you had never done?
No regrets, but *The Violent Ones*, directed by Fernando Lamas, is pretty awful. And out of the 102 that I've done so far, there are bound to be a few turkeys, but none that are actually odious, as far as I know. A few of them where I only worked a couple of days I never read or saw. Probably none of them will put you to sleep as fast as *Star Wars: Episode One*.

You've directed some movies yourself. How would you describe your style as a director, and which directors you worked with influenced you the most?
I don't know if I'm influenced by directors. More so by painters, sculptors, writers, composers and, of course, actors. And life. I think I approach each movie afresh, both as an actor and as a director. As an actor, my main objective is for my work to be invisible. I try to do the same thing as a director. And then, the rules are: don't cheat, don't compromise, don't hurt anybody. Don't take any shit from anyone, and don't forget to have fun. Same rules as life. Get it in the can and back to town without dropping any more stitches than you have to. A lot happens during the editing for me. You can pick up the stitches there.

You play the title character in Kill Bill. *What was it like working with Tarantino? Have you already seen the movie?*
No one has seen it, but it is going to be great. Tarantino has outdone himself. He proved himself to me an absolute master. No one I've worked with has taken me so far. He leaves no stone unturned. He has incredible energy and spreads more joy than Santa Clause. I love the guy.

How did you manage to stay in the business for so long?
One foot in front of the other. And I don't let the ups and downs get me. Well, the ups yes, I enjoy them. The downs no. Skip Sherwood, who was the executive producer of the movies I directed, once said to me "There are no failures in Hollywood, only people who give up too soon." And then,

strangely, he gave up. I took the bitter with the bitter. Filled the empty spots with music and love, family, and, yes, dope and booze. When things were slow I sometimes concentrated on training the rest of the family. I'm working on my youngest daughter, Kansas, right now. She's coming up fast. You'll be hearing about her very soon. It's always seemed to me like a mission. A holy one, like *The Blues Brothers*. It's a marathon. You can't quit, even coming in dead last has honour. Quitting doesn't. Look, I had absolute faith in my future when I was starving in New York, and no one believed in me besides me and my girlfriend. I'd be stupid to lose that faith after I've become a fucking icon. Oh, yes: and I love the work.

Did your father's profession influence you to become an actor?
Well, of course. I could have done other things, but the pull of theatre was irresistible. And I thought about making him proud, even happy. That was a big factor. I loved him, and life gave him a rough time. I started out with Shakespearean repertory. A great way to cut your teeth. Acting classes came much later, after starring on Broadway twice and doing a series, *Shane*. I still study sporadically. When I was involved in the ten month commitment to *Kill Bill*, I called up Milton Katselas, my teacher, and said, "I guess you're wondering why I haven't been in class." He replied, "We've all been wondering that for the last twenty eight years."

DAVID CARRADINE FILMOGRAPHY

2010
Su Qi-Er
Detention
The Rain

2009
All Hell Broke Loose
Bad Cop
Mental (tv series)
Autumn
Break
Crank: High Voltage
Absolute Evil
My Suicide
Road of No Return

2008
Kandisha (tv series)
Death Race (voice)
Last Hour
Kung Fu Killer (tv)
Hell Ride
Richard III
The Golden Boys

2007
Big Stan
Fuego
Permanent Vacation
The Trident
How to Rob a Bank
Treasure Raiders
Camille
Fall Down Dead
Epic Movie
In Case of Emergency (tv series)

Blizhniy Boy: The Ultimate Fighter
Homo Erectus/National Lampoon's The Stoned Age

2006

Saints Row (vg, voice)
Danny Phantom (2005-06, tv series, voice)
Final Move
Medium (tv series)
The Last Sect
Son of the Dragon (tv series)

2005

Miracle at Sage Creek
Brothers in Arms
Eve (tv series)

2004

Hair High
Last Goodbye
Dead & Breakfast
Kill Bill: Vol. 2

2003

American Reel
Kill Bill: Vol. 1

2002

Bala Perdida
The Outsider (tv)
Wheatfield with Crows

2001

Balto II: Wolf Quest
Out of the Wilderness (tv)
The Defectors (tv)
Warden of Red Rock (tv)
G. O. D.
Largo Winch: The Heir (tv)

2000

By Dawn's Early Light (tv)
The Donor
Down 'n Dirty
Nightfall
Dangerous Curves
An American Tail: The Treasure of Manhattan Island

1999

Kiss of a Stranger
Natural Selection
The Puzzle in the Air
Shepherd
Walking After Midnight (tv series)
Zoo
Knocking on Death's Door

1998

Light Speed
Lovers and Liars
Martian Law (tv)
Sublet
The Effects of Magic
The New Swiss Family Robinson
Children of the Corn V: Fields of Terror
Nosferatu: The First Vampire (tv)

1997

Full Blast
Macon County Jail
The Rage
Lost Treasure of Dos Santos (tv)
Last Stand at Saber River (tv)
Too Hot to Skate (tv)

1996

Captain Simian & The Space Monkeys (tv series, voice, uncredited)

1995

Pi li huo

1994

Dead Centre

1993

Bitter End
Frontera Sur
Kill Zone
Kung Fu: The Legend Continues (tv series)
Kung Fu: The Legend Continues (tv)

1992

Distant Justice
Animal Instincts
Roadside Prophets
Night Rhythms
Waxwork II: Lost in Time
Double Trouble
Evil Toons

1991

El Águila y el Caballo
Capital Punishment
Field of Fire
Karate Cop
Project Eliminator
The Gambler Returns: The Luck of the Draw (tv)
Sundown: The Vampire in Retreat
Brotherhood of the Gun (tv)
Deadly Surveillance (tv)

1990

Dune Warriors
Future Force
Martial Law
Midnight Fear
Night Children
Think Big
Sonny Boy
Future Zone
Bird on a Wire

1989

Crime of Crimes
Las Huellas del Lince
Warlords
Try This One for Size
The Cover Girl and the Cop (tv)

1988
Animal Protector
Crime Zone
Fatal Secret
Open Fire
Run for Your Life
Wizards of the Lost Kingdom II
I Saw What You Did (tv)

1987
Heartbeat
The Misfit Brigade
Six Against the Rock (tv)

1986
Armed Response
Bad Girls in the Movies
Oceans of Fire (tv)
Behind Enemy Lines
North and South II (tv series)
Kung Fu: The Movie (tv)

1985
North and South (tv series)
The Bad Seed (tv)

1984
A Distant Scream (tv)
Scream (tv)
Río Abajo
The Warrior and the Sorceress
Jealousy (tv)

1983
Lone Wolf McQuade

1982
Trick or Treats
Q
Safari 3000

1981
Americana

1980
High Noon, Part II: The Return of Will Kane (tv)
Cloud Dancer
The Long Riders
Gauguin the Savage (tv)

1979
Fast Charlie... The Moonbeam Rider
Je te tiens, tu me tiens par la barbichette
Mr Horn (tv)

1978
Circle of Iron/The Silent Flute
Deathsport
Gray Lady Down

1977
The Serpent's Egg
Thunder and Lightning

1976
Bound for Glory
Cannonball

1975
Death Race 2000

1973
Mean Streets
The Long Goodbye

1972
You and Me
Kung Fu (tv series)
Boxcar Bertha
Kung Fu (tv)

1971
Maybe I'll Come Home in the Spring (tv)

1970
Macho Callahan
The McMasters

1969
The Good Guys and the Bad Guys
Young Billy Young
Heaven with a Gun

1967
The Violent Ones
Johnny Belinda (tv)
Shane (tv series)
Too Many Thieves

1965
Bus Riley's Back in Town

1964
Taggart

BRUCE DAVISON

BRUCE DAVISON has played an incredible number of roles in all kinds of movies. From cult hits like *Willard* to blockbusters like *X-Men*, Davison always manages to make the part his own. But it was his depiction of a rat-loving psycho in *Willard* that made his name, an unforgettable performance that sees him frequently cast as cinematic villains to this day. His career has been pretty unique, including films like the Dogme 95 feature *The King is Alive*; the Raymond Carver inspired *Short Cuts*, directed by Robert Altman; and the indie production *Dahmer*, in which he played the eponymous killer's estranged father.

Davison began acting on stage and is a rare example of a stage actor able to bring their theatrical talents to the silver screen. Unlike Anthony Hopkins, he always manages to be both believable and compelling, and can become each character to the point of portraying both Mystique *and* Senator Kelly in the *X-Men* films: subtlety is his forté. Maybe that's why he's managed to stay in the business for so long (more than thirty years) without being exactly a superstar. His portrayals of madness are never clichéd, and no matter how extreme the character Davison somehow manages to humanise them. Even Willard…

NICANOR LORETI *How did you first get into acting?*
BRUCE DAVISON I started in theatre in Pennsylvania. I was part of the Lincoln Center Company back in the fifties and got into film from theatre. I studied acting in Pennsylvania University and NYU, when they started out their theatre program.

And was it difficult going from theatre to film?
I don't know. I don't think there is a way to describe the transition. Maybe in theatre, the job of an actor is not just getting a part… It's very different. There are different ways to handle things. Maybe an artist would work in watercolour, or sculpture or whatever. You're just doing your thing. In film, you have to deal with whatever degree of intimacy you can get to have in front of all those crew people. On stage, you have to get to a hundred people or more with your performance. Create an illusion that what they are seeing is real.

The next question I want to ask you is about Willard. *I think it's the movie that made your career.*
Well, it was one of them. That was in 1972.

How did you get that part?
I auditioned for Daniel Mann, the director and for the producer at Paramount Studios. I remember seeing a poster for the film at the Cannes film festival. It was then called *Rat Man's Diaries* and it was called that until we shot it and they changed it to *Willard*. So I auditioned, they made me read for the part… And I got it.

And did you think it would have such an impact on your future career… that it would become a cult classic?
No, one never knows how those things will go. I remember reading the scene in which I scream "Tear 'em up!" and thought, "This scene is really a classic" and wanted to be in it. But I never knew and to this day I don't know what's going to make a film successful. I was surprised, and happily so, that it achieved such success in its day.

And about the character, what did you have in mind to portray him? Not to show him just as crazy but something else.
Well, in a word: survival. Willard's motivation is survival. He's trying to survive in a world that he doesn't deal very well with. And when his mother dies, he is alone except for the rats. And they become his friends and protectors and ultimately his demise.

Do you see this movie more as a tragedy or as a moral story?
As a kid's horror movie [laughs].

And of course you saw the remake, right?
I have yet to see the remake. I have a videotape of it and I know that I appear in a painting as Willard's father, but I have yet to see the film. Have you?

Yeah.
How is it?

Well, it's pretty good. It's very different to the original, and it shows a different angle on the story. Speaking about horror movies, I know you played Jeffrey Dahmer's father in Dahmer.
I did the film because there's an incredible scene between the father and the son and I had read the father's book. And I think you can see in what he wrote what it took for a man to become a monster. And the anguish of a father, which is something I can't even begin to comprehend, but I wanted to try the best I could do as an actor. So that's why I played Lionel Dahmer.

And does the movie have anything to do with reality? Because it hasn't opened here.
Yes, it's a very realistic depiction of not so much the murders or the gore but how sick this boy became.

Now, about the X-Men *movies. I've always wanted to know what it's like to portray Senator Kelly in those films, because in* X-Men 2 *you're really playing Mystique...*
Well, if you look closely, I'm sitting a little differently than I did in the first. There's a little body language that changes but apart from that I didn't have much to do in the second film. It was closer to a special appearance. My character as it was appeared only in the first film, and it was an arduous job to do.

Did you talk to Brian Singer about portraying the character differently?

Yeah, he just thought of a way for me to portray Mystique, and he wanted to get away with it. But Senator Kelly doesn't have much to do in the second movie except for his appearance at the beginning of it.

In Runaway Jury *you play that kind of bad guy character again... Do you enjoy those types of roles or do you see them as just work?*
It goes back and forth, you know? Everybody likes a different meal. Well, it's very difficult to compare those to the other types of roles I do. For example, it was truly enjoyable making *Short Cuts*, working with such a wonderful cast, especially Jack Lemmon and Robert Altman.

And what was it like working with Robert Altman?
Robert has a great respect for actors and especially for improvisation. I worked with him on a project that was probably the most complex story-wise of them all. There was a very tight script and story and there wasn't much room for improvisation. There was some, yes, but not a lot. But the good thing was that he gave the actors the possibility to collaborate and create their characters.

And did you read the original stories in which the film was based?
You mean the Raymond Carver short stories? Yes, of course I read the Carver short stories and I've always been so enamored of his work and brilliant writing. I've been friends with Tess Gallagher, who was his companion, for many years.

The stories are somewhat different in the movie than in the book.
Yes, everything was sort of toned down and connected together. But the structure of a lot of the stories is still on top, and that is what connects the stories within the movie script.

You also did a Dogma 95 movie, The King is Alive. *What was it like shooting that film? I think it's the only American Dogma film worth seeing.*
Well, it was also made by English as well as Danish producers, so it was sort of a cornucopia. We shot in Namibia. The director came to Los Angeles and asked me if I wanted to be in his film and it was an experience like none I've

ever had. The film itself is quite amazing. An awful lot of improvisation went into that and at the same time you can afford to do that when you're shooting on DV. The difficulty that was working within the Dogma experiment was both interesting and problematic.

And what's the main difference between making a Dogma movie and a traditional Hollywood movie besides the budget and the improv?
Well, a traditional American movie is not so much about the acting but about the structure. So the story and the direction are pretty much attached to the wheel. A Dogma film is very much centered in the essential, so you're pretty much down to basics. I really enjoyed the experience, because it gave me a great opportunity to do all sorts of elemental work. At the same time the focus was on the acting. You had a crew of seven instead of a crew of seventy and you were shooting in sequence, with natural, natural sets — your dressing room is that sand dune over there and it's quiet. And I enjoyed the experience immensely, especially being in the desert for that period of time.

So it was closer to doing theatre than cinema.
Yes, much more.

Another cool movie you were in is Six Degrees of Separation. *It's a very special film.*
Oh, yes, the script is great. And Fred Schepisi is very specific about what he wants visually in a shot and I enjoyed working with him very much. I became friends with Donald Sutherland, and we've known each other ever since. And I enjoyed it, it was great opportunity to go back to New York and though I didn't have much to do in the film, it still meant a lot to me.

You were also in the Harry and the Hendersons *tv show. Did you enjoy tv?*
Yeah. I was working in a play called *The Cocktail Hour* and they just came and asked me if I wanted to do it. It was a Steven Spielberg tv series project and I had known Steven for a long time. We were neighbors when we were younger. I became involved in that, and I ended up doing it for three years.

And would you do a tv series again?

I'm doing it. I'm doing a series called *Kingdom Hospital*.

Oh, I thought it was a miniseries...
Well, it's a combination of both, really. I don't know what they're calling it now [laughs]. They are one hour episodes of a story that has an open end. So it's very possible that we'll continue next year. It'll come out this year on ABC.

It's a Stephen King screenplay, right?
Stephen King wrote the script of one hour episodes and the whole project is based on Lars Von Trier's *The Kingdom*. That's a tv series that he did before the Dogma stuff.

And did you see the Von Trier version?
Yes, I did. I saw the first season.

And are both versions very different?
Well, an author like Stephen King will always have something else to add to whatever he does.

What's your character like?
Well, I play sort of the villain of the piece. My character is all about power and arrogance and you know, maintaining self-righteousness about what I do and who I am.

So you're a bad guy once again.
Once again. I'm either the bad guy or the villain or the victim, you know. Every year brings a different surprise.

And do you think it's Willard's fault that you've played the bad guy so much? Because he's like a villain and a victim at the same time.
Oh, I think Willard is more of a hero, only he's a twisted one [laughs]. I just like to play these types of characters, because they are somewhat complex.

Which character would you like to play someday that you haven't already? I think it would be Richard III. I'd love to do it onstage. And in a movie, I don't know. I'm enjoying the ones I'm playing right now.

BRUCE DAVISON FILMOGRAPHY

2010
Psych (tv series)

2009
A Golden Christmas (tv)
Ghost Whisperer (tv series)
Passengers
MegaFault (tv)
The Closer (tv series)
Criminal Minds (tv series)
Knight Rider (2008-09, tv series)
La linea/The Line

2008
The Librarian: The Curse of the Judas Chalice (tv)
The Cleaner (tv series)
Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles (tv series)
Close to Home (2005-07, tv series)

2007
The L Word (tv series)
Breach
Battlestar Galactica (tv series)

2006
The Dead Girl
Special Ops: Delta Force
CSI: Miami (tv series)
Lost (tv series)
Untitled Brad Copeland Project (tv)

2005
The Triangle (tv series)
8MM 2
Touched
Going Shopping
Numb3rs (tv series)
Confession
Jack & Bobby (tv series)
Law & Order: Trial by Jury (tv series)
Hate Crime

2004
Going Shopping
Kingdom Hospital (tv series)
Evergreen
The Clinic

2003
Rules of the Game
Runaway Jury
Manfast
X2: X-Men United
Out of the Ashes (tv)

2002
Dahmer
Too Young to Be a Dad (tv)
LA Law: The Movie (tv)
High Crimes

2001
Off Season
Summer Catch
The Other Side (tv)
Crazy/Beautiful
On the Edge (tv)
The Mutant Watch (tv)

2000
X-Men
The King is Alive

1999
Locked in Silence (tv)
Vendetta (tv)
A Memory in My Heart (tv)
At First Sight

1998
Little Girl Fly Away (tv)
Apt Pupil
Paulie

1997
Color of Justice (tv)
Lovelife

1996
Hidden in America
The Crucible

After Jimmy (tv)
Grace of My Heart
Widow's Kiss (tv)
It's My Party

1995
Present Tense, Past Perfect (tv)
The Skateboard Kid 2
Down, Out & Dangerous (tv)
The Baby-Sitters Club
The Cure
Homage
Far From Home: The Adventures of Yellow Dog

1994
Someone Else's Child (tv)

1993
Six Degrees of Separation
A Mother's Revenge (tv)
Short Cuts
An Ambush of Ghosts
Desperate Choices: To Save My Child (tv)

1992
Live! From Death Row

1991
Steel and Lace
Harry and the Hendersons (tv series)
Stolen: One Husband (tv)

1990
Longtime Companion

1989
Lady in the Corner (tv)

1987
Poor Little Rich Girl: The Barbara Hutton Story (tv)
The Misfit Brigade

1986
The Ladies Club

1985
Hunter
Spies like Us
Alfred Hitchcock Presents (tv)

1984
Crimes of Passion

1983
Lies
The Taming of the Shrew
Ghost Dancing (tv)

1982
Kiss My Grits
Tomorrow's Child (tv)

1981
High Risk
Incident at Crestridge (tv)
The Wave (tv)
The Lathe of Heaven (tv)

1979
The Gathering, Part II (tv)
Mind Over Murder (tv)
Brass Target

1978
Mourning Becomes Electra (tv series)
Summer of My German Soldier (tv)
Deadman's Curve (tv)

1977
French Quarter
Portrait of Grandpa Doc
Short Eyes
The Gathering (tv)

1976
Grand Jury
Mother, Jugs & Speed

1975
The Last Survivors (tv)

1974
Mame

1973
The Affair (tv)

1972
Peege
Ulzana's Raid
The Jerusalem File

1971
Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me
Owen Marshall, Counselor at Law (tv)
Willard

1970
The Strawberry Statement

1969
Last Summer

BILLY DRAGO

EARTH'S MOST EVIL ACTOR, Billy Drago, has played villains galore in genres ranging from sci fi to horror, westerns to crime. He has appeared in films directed by Ronny Yu and Clint Eastwood, and his unique voice and charisma has made him a landmark villain in B movies of the last twenty years. Billy's unique performances have elevated straight-to-video movies like *Death Ring* (starring Chad McQueen and Mike Norris) and *Delta Force 2* to extremely watchable standards. His portrayal of Frank Nitti in Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables* was arguably his most memorable role to date. I saw it, and from thereon in sought out all his other work; his scene on the rooftop alongside Kevin Costner is one of the highlights of the entire film.

My buddies and I used to scour $2 stores for videos starring Billy. Stuff like *Lunarcop* or *Deadly Heroes* (both starring Michael Pare), *China White* (directed by legendary Hong Kong director Ronny Yu), *The Outfit* (co-starring Lance Henriksen) and *Cyborg 2* (which featured and all star cast including Angelina Jolie, Elias Koteas and, of all people, Jack Palance) were the kind of movies you could unearth in these stores: it was heaven! Billy began doing small roles in movies for Clint Eastwood, and these days you can spot him in about four or five new flicks every year, alongside his regular television work. If you think you have seen all the eccentric, exotic actors out there, but haven't seen Billy in action, you haven't seen anything yet — Mr Drago is one of a kind.

NICANOR LORETI *I've been a fan of yours since I saw* The Untouchables. *How did you get to play that part?*

BILLY DRAGO I know you talked to Andy Garcia. Well, for some reason they (the people on production) weren't happy with the way the cast was, and so they would try to get different people to do some of the parts. And Andy had already done something on the Frank Nitti part, and he wasn't interested in that, he was interested in the other part (that of George Stone). They were negotiating with (Robert) De Niro to try and get him. I had met the cast director two years before that. He had called me, and told me I wasn't right for the part that was cast at that moment but he said he really liked me and he'd like to work with me in the future. I thought, "well, everybody says that, and I appreciate it, but they're just the normal things people say." And two years later he called and told me they were going to do this picture, called it *The Untouchables*. So I went and met Brian (De Palma), and he said I was the guy. In the meantime, my father had passed away, and I had gone to his funeral and they called me back from there and told me that I had to be in Chicago the day after that, and I said "OK, no problem" and it was as simple as that.

Incredible. You had played the bad guy in The Pale Rider. *How was it to work with and be directed by Clint Eastwood?*

I loved working with him. He's such an interesting guy. The interesting thing was watching him change from directing to playing his part. It was great seeing him change his director pose when he was about to act. When he was directing he was this middle-aged guy with his stuffed hat over his head, and all hunched over, and when he had to play his part, he stepped out from behind the camera, he transformed. He had a routine that he would follow: he would walk almost in a rectangle and slowly take off the coat, and it would take him about five minutes. And then, all of a sudden, there would be Clint Eastwood, the character he's created over all these years. It was a real transformation.

It was every little kid's fantasy to be in an old west town and face down Clint Eastwood in a gun fight. When we got ready to shoot, he didn't block it out. He didn't say "you go here and you go here." He just told us to go wherever we wanted to go and they'd set up the cameras where we ended up.

When he had to shoot interiors he took out all of the lights, and he slowly lit little pieces of light to find how he liked it best. There were times when the set looked like a Rembrandt picture. He's such a creative man, I like him very much. Also, he doesn't have his actors audition. They just come in and he talks with them about what they think about their role, how you'd work with him and what you have in mind about the character. One day he told me he used to hate the auditions so much as a young actor that he'd never put another actor through that [laughs].

How was it that you started acting? Was it in theatre?
I think when I was young I did the school plays and all that. I come from a very small town. I don't think I've ever seen a play I wasn't in. I wanted to be in the movies, but I didn't know how to enter the industry, so eventually I went to the radio. I was in the radio business as a disc jockey for a number of years. One day I was in Kansas City, and there was a play that had advertising on my show. So I went to see the director and told him: "Look, I always wanted be an actor, and I never had an opportunity." Then I auditioned for this part and it was the first time I did it for a professional role. A couple of days later they called the radio station and they told me: "We really want you to act with us. We'll send someone to have you read for a replacement for a main character in New York." So, on the next Monday I went to New York, and then we had a tour in Canada for six months. It was a great idea. I was going through divorce at that time, and I was very young and just separated. So I called my lawyer and asked him to sell the radio show, sell everything, to give it to my soon to be ex-wife, because on Monday I was going to be an actor. And he asked me if I had gone mad. But I told him that on Monday I'd be out of here, so sell the radio show, sell everything, because I'm going. So I did and I toured Canada for six months and then, when we finished, they asked me where I wanted to go. I asked them for a train ticket back to New York and a little time to think. So, all of a sudden, I was an actor.

You've played the bad guy hundreds of times, but in Guncrazy*, with Drew Barrymore, you played Hank Fulton, this priest who liked snakes. That was a different character.*

I was very happy with that. First of all, it was a movie directed by a woman, Tamra Davis, and I found out that I enjoyed working like that. It was a different experience. And I loved to work with Drew Barrymore. I met the mother, and the whole family, I met them a couple of times, they went to visit her on the set. Originally, I was to play the mother's boyfriend, who tries to rape [Drew] Barrymore. I said: "You know, I'd really love to be in your movie but I'd really rather play this preacher, because I grew up around [this environment]. I had an aunt who was a very conservative, religious person, and I grew up around these kinds of preachers and I really want to play one of these people that I saw as I grew up, as a child." They said "OK. We'd love to have you in this movie. We'd love you to do that part." So they got Joe D'Alessandro to play the other part. He was known because he'd been in the Andy Warhol movies.

So he played that part and I had the chance to play this preacher, that I had seen many times. And I ended up doing it twice, because they wrote an episode of the television show *The X-Files* for me, where I played this preacher on television again. I know in your questionnaire you asked whether I stuck to the script or did improvisation, and of course I'm very dependent on the script, but in that case, I did improvise a lot with the scenes on the church, with the members of the congregation, and the scenes with the snakes and all that. For me, words are just sounds arranged in a particular order. For me it's called moving pictures for a reason, they're motion pictures. For me the image is more important than the words, now that they're being translated anyway, now that everything goes over the words. But the pictures, everyone can understand the pictures.

Of all the bad guys you played, I think the ones in Deadly Heroes *and* Death Ring *were very similar. So extremely evil you could see it on their faces.*
There's three of them in fact: the one from *Delta Force 2* and *Death Ring* and *Deadly Heroes*. They were basically identical. It was very different for me because they were three opportunities to play the same character. All three of those were basically the same man, standing in different situations. It was like a chance to do a very long story, like three episodes with the same character.

And you could die three different deaths…
Yeah [laughs]. I could do it with different people working around me. With the same character I could do something like a long six hour movie. I guess they were like men without limits. For them there was no difference between treating you well or killing you. They didn't see themselves as bad. It didn't made a difference to them how things went, or even whether they died. I tried to permeate a kind of suicidal aspect in them. Like the guy in *Death Ring*, I almost felt he was so happy, he was waiting for someone to come and kill him. And that was what he was waiting for all of those years.

Someone who was a great contender for him?
Yeah, he wasn't unhappy with that. If he won, he'd just have to wait for another person, but if he lost, he wouldn't be able to enjoy it much, but it'd be a change.

You made the movie The Outfit *with Lance Henriksen. What was it like to work with Lance?*
I love him. He's crazy. He's a very strange and interesting man. I loved working with him very much. I think that was one of the reasons I shot that in New York. The people that made that picture didn't have much money. They had to ask "OK, we only have this amount of money, and that means that you're only going to get a very short time to shoot; one week." We flew from Los Angeles, but we didn't meet on the plane, we never met each other, but we knew off each other, and so we met in the lobby of the hotel at about midnight. We stayed up all night. And Lance said "Oh, let's have party." We sort of partied all night. And then at six o'clock that morning we went up to shoot, and we shot all day and all night. And pretty much the next day we went home [laughs]. That's pretty much how it went. Lance is great. He's a very special artist. Such an interesting man.

I agree. He has played so many memorable parts in his career, like Near Dark. *I think his character there reminds me of many of those played by you. Changing the subject, what was your experience with Ronny Yu, the Chinese director, in* China White*?*

Oh yeah, he's great. He going to direct a film for New Line Entertainment [*Freddy vs. Jason*]. I liked working with him very much. And at the time I did it, it was the first picture he did in the English language. We were on location in the Netherlands, in Amsterdam, and Belgium. I think he was a stunt actor, and he has a slight limp. He got injured making a picture, I could be wrong on this, but I think he got injured making an action picture in Hong Kong. That's one reason why he chose to become a director; I think he was an actor, originally.

I didn't know that.

It's a good story, anyway, but I could be completely wrong. That's the way I remember him telling it, when we were sitting in Amsterdam. Funny, you asked me what's the difference between the way we made the movie, because we had half a Hong Kong crew and half a Dutch crew, to shoot the picture. And naturally they [the Dutch] like Rembrandt and they take a long time. The Honk Kong crew, they worked very quickly. So, it took them a few days to work together. They asked, "What's the big difference between how the Hong Kong people shoot the pictures, and the way they shoot pictures in America?" And I was telling him, "In Hong Kong they didn't care if my character drove up in a blue car, and when I left I drove away in a red car" [laughs]. They said: "Well, the Hong Kong audience doesn't care about that, so they don't pay any attention to it" And I told them "In America, they care whether you come up in a red car or a blue car." There was a scene where I knocked everything off the desk, and when we were first shooting it, they weren't concerned about putting back everything the same way where it was. It didn't matter. And when I explained this to them, they went and had this lady, who came, and instead of having like a Polaroid camera to take a picture and fix it back, she worked like a wonderful sketch artist. She would sketch everything so quickly. And we would place everything exactly where it was in the picture. It was very interesting working with them. Ronny's a great guy. When he comes to America, he comes around and we go down to this nice little Chinese restaurant that he told me about. He's a great guy and a great director.

About your television work — there are a lot of series, but what I remember clearest is the episode on the Friday the 13th *series…*
Ah, yes, the one with the puppet.

Yes, that one, Read My Lips.
The puppet that comes to life. I forgot the name of the movie, it was a remake. It was a friend of mine, Francis Delia, who directed that. He called me and he asked me if I'd like to do it. He said it was an anthology series. There were two feature films, made a number of years ago, based on that same story. So it was a great chance to do that. Plus, unlike most television shows, we were shooting on location. We went to Canada. And I much rather shoot on location, for me it's almost like we run away and we join the carnival. So, we didn't have to worry about installing the phone or whatever. It's just making the movie. For me it was a wonderful part to play. I went to fly to New York and did a lot of stand-up comedy there. I quite enjoyed it; I liked the television very much.

You haven't made sequels to your movies, except the Mirror, Mirror *series. You made* Mirror, Mirror 3: The Voyeur *and also the fourth part.*
Frankly it was two friends of mine, Rachel Gordon and Virginia Perfili, who directed those, that was a reason to do them. As a child I loved scary movies, they were my favourite kind of pictures. So I enjoy that genre of picture. It was directed, again, by the two of them. It was the first time for me to see two people direct, and women. Both were directed and produced by women. And both were good friends of mine. On one movie, a woman was in charge of photography. It's not often you get a chance of working with women on those levels of the creative process. That's why I did it.

Speaking of women, I interviewed Cynthia Rothrock last week.
Ah, yes [laughs] — I can imagine what you're going to ask me.

She told me that in the movie you did together, Angel of Fury: Lady Dragon 2*, you had a very, very difficult scene to shoot, and she was very scared because you played your character so truthfully.*

That scene we did was great. I think on most of the versions of it that they released it was cut out except, maybe, on the DVD. It scared the producers as well. The director used to be a director of photography for the early Clint Eastwood pictures, so he pretty much let me do whatever I wanted. He enjoyed the way I did my work. It was so funny because she's so strong. In the fight scenes, she kicked me around and she shoved me against the wall... I was bruised everywhere. I said: "How am I going to fight this woman who's been the undefeated kickboxing world champion for all these years?" And she's fought all of these heavies, all of these guys who were really much more fighting types. The only way I can fight her is psychologically. It was a real battle between the two of us. She was a really good sport. She went along with whatever I wanted her to do, she just played the scene.

I was just thinking about it the other day; they were rerunning that movie we did together on television.

She also told me that you had an acting school, down there in LA.
Yes. It's really Silvana's actually [Silvana Gallardo — Drago's wife]. She started it — she's a great actress in her own right. Whenever she would go away to work, she didn't want to shut her classes down and I would go in and run the class. Luckily for me, and luckily for her as well, she has quite an active career. So there were a number of times when I had the opportunity to run the school. She has such a wonderful group of students, in the school. All these wonderful people over there — I'm always happy when one of them gets the chance to work.

Did you ever think about directing something?
Yes, I have a lot of projects. In a sense, on some of those pictures I shot overseas, many members of the crew don't speak English, so in a lot of the scenes I was in I had the opportunity to direct them myself. I always wanted to be responsible for the entire picture.

You started your career playing Native Americans... What about that?
I was very grateful for the opportunity to play natives, but pretty soon they don't think of you as an actor playing an Indian, they think of you as an Indian actor, so eventually I quit playing those parts.

What was your first role as a stage actor?
My first role as a stage actor was… I got my union card as a stage actor doing a part in *The Fantastics*, the musical, so that was pretty much the first. I don't remember the name of the first play I ever did, which was in Canada; what I remember is that it was about true incidents that happened throughout Canada, and I played a famous Canadian Catholic priest. He was eventually executed in Canada for leading a rebellion and I played him in the play that toured Canada. I loved touring Canada. We played in places that weren't even theatres: for example, we played in this town that had been destroyed by a tornado years ago, so when we did the scene about the tornado, the locals, who had never seen a play before in their lives and had never seen a movie and had no radio or tv, and were very isolated (we were a few miles from the Artic Circle)… They had no idea what we were doing, and when the tornado hit in the play, they all went crazy and they knocked everything over and hid under the tables. It was very interesting. Most of them didn't speak English, they only saw the actions because in a lot of places we played in North Canada they have German settlements and old Russian settlements, and obviously Canadian-Indian settlements and things like that. Other places we played they didn't speak English, so we did the show in English but they would come anyway because they had never seen anything like that.

Your true last name is Burroughs. Why did you change it to Drago? Because Darren uses the last name Burroughs.
Darren Burroughs is my son. He was in *Northern Exposure*. When I originally went to Canada I had to join the Canadian Actors Union. On my mother's side, the gypsy side, which comes from Transylvania, they use the name Drago and on my father's we have the name Burroughs, but they already had a Burroughs there, someone I had never met. So if I wanted to do the Canadian show, I had to join the union, but they said that I couldn't use that name because it was already taken. So I took the name from my mother's side, and when my son became an actor, he was able to keep the last name Burroughs, so that's why we have different last names.

Tell me about this Corman production, Hunter's Blood.

Hunter's Blood, with Clu Gallagher, was something like a remake of *Deliverance*, that movie with Burt Reynolds and Jon Voight set down in the Deep South. It was Roger Corman's picture, Roger Corman's take on *Deliverance*. It's the same basic plot: hunters go into the backwoods, hunting Clu Gallagher. Sam Bottoms is also in the picture; there were a lot of well known actors in that movie. I play one of the backwoods characters who's after Clu and Sam. Sam and I became good friends after that picture, and when they opened the picture, Roger Corman put it in the theatres all over the south. And it played to sold out audiences and what he would do is take Sam and I in some kind of old-fashioned promotion tour. Something like 'the Circus has Come to Town' — and they would have the premiere of the movie in some little town with our presence. We would go from the hotel to the theatre in a limo and they would have girls like Miss Florida or whatever and we would get out of the limo and walk down the red carpet and we would go to the theatre and make a little speech to the whole audience and the lights would go down and we would sneak out. Then we would drive to the next theatre and we would do the same thing and by the time the first theatre had finished the screening, we would sneak back into the first one like we've been there watching all of it and then we would be up front signing autographs and give away movie posters to the people and then we would go to the next one just in time to catch the end of it. At that time, *WrestleMania* was very popular, so they would take Sam and I to the local tv station and we would come out and chase each other in the ring as the bad guy and good guy to advertise the movie and they would say, "Tonight you can see them in the movie chasing each other." Then, we would move out to the next town. They only made like ten prints of the picture but we went around and it played all over the south. In almost every American southern state. He had quite a success with it and after that he released it on video and it was my first experience with an old-time genius like that. He was like a Cecil B. Demille of promotion. It was a lot of fun.

Can you tell me about your DJ days?

When I was a DJ, I worked under the name of Johnny Black. I played all over the country, and started out in a small station. I heard that they were looking for somebody in this radio station in Kansas and I just went down

on a Sunday. I was living like a hundred miles from there and somebody told me they were looking for a disc jockey. So I went to see them and they asked me: "So, do you have any experience in this business?" And I said: "Yes, of course [laughs]! I worked in North Dakota and every place up there." I lied. I went into the studio and I did a tape and they liked it so they said: "If you can come to work on Tuesday morning, you can star." I went early in the morning and they had a DJ that was working, so I went to watch him and see what he did because I had no idea what I was supposed to do. So I watched him and after he finished his show, I went up there. And eventually 300 or more stations carried my show around the country and it was syndicated. And I was doing pretty much whatever I wanted to do. I played a lot of blues music and jazz, and country music. If I heard a song I liked, I would play it. So I did that for about five years.

BILLY DRAGO FILMOGRAPHY

2009
Ghost Town (tv)
Dark Moon Rising
The Ritual

2008
Rounds
Copperhead (tv)
Supernatural (tv series)
3 Stories About Evil

2007
Zombie Hunters
Revamped
Moving McAllister
The Dead One

2006
Lime Salted Love
The Hills Have Eyes
Masters of Horror (episode: Imprint, tv)
13 Graves (tv)
Seven Mummies
Blood Relic

2005
Demon Hunter
Worn Like a Tattoo

2005
Soul Searchers
Moving McAllister
El Muerto
Seven Mummies
Blood Relic
Demon Hunter

2004
Mysterious Skin
Fort Doom
Tremors 4: The Legend Begins

2002
Deceivers
Welcome to America
The Circuit

2001
Death Game

2000
Mirror, Mirror IV: Reflection
Very Mean Men

1999
Strike Zone
Soccer Dog: The Movie

1998
Breaking the Silence
Monkey Business

1997
Convict 762
All in the Dark
Assault on Devil's Island (tv)

1996
Blood Money
Scifighters
Mad Dog Time

1995
Drifting School
Mirror, Mirror III: The Voyeur
Never Say Die
Phoenix
The Takeover

1994
Deadly Heroes
Lunarcop

1993
Cyborg 2
Death Ring
Lady Dragon 2
The Outfit
The Adventures of Brisco County Jr.

1992
Martial Law II: Undercover
Guncrazy
Secret Games

1991
Diplomatic Immunity

1990
Delta Force 2: Operation Stranglehold

1989
Dark Before Dawn
Gwang tin lung foo wooi
Prime Suspect
True Blood

1998
Freeway
Hero and the Terror

1987
Banzai Runner
Hunter's Blood
The Untouchables
In Self Defense (tv)

1986
Vamp
North and South II (tv series)

1985
Invasion U.S. A.
Pale Rider

1982
Johnny Belinda (tv)

1981
Cutter's Way

1980
Windwalker
The Chisholms (tv series)
No Other Love (tv)

LANCE HENRIKSEN

GOOD OL' LANCE. You'll probably remember him as Bishop, the android from *Aliens* and *Alien*^{3}, or maybe as Frank Black from the *Millennium* tv series, but he's also played some of the coolest movie villains of all time. Jesse Cooper, the ruthless 'paterfamilias' from Kathryn Bigelow's *Near Dark*, and Chains (the mean biker from *Stone Cold*), are only two of his performances, but they're the ones that made me want to try and see every movie this guy had made. One thing that distinguishes him from other actors is his commitment: no matter the project, Henriksen always delivers an amazing performance. After studying in the Actor's Studio and performing on stage for several years, Lance got his first acting role in *Dog Day Afternoon*, directed by Sidney Lumet. After that, he started working non stop, year after year. Among others, he was in Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, Philip Kaufman's *The Right Stuff*, and James Cameron's *Piranha 2: The Spawning*. In fact, he's done so many movies that it's almost impossible to name a few without leaving out one that's really worth mentioning, but his best works include: *The Pit and the Pendulum*, *Aliens*, *Near Dark*, the buddy cop movie *Delta Heat*, and *Pumpkinhead*. He's also done lots of B movies and sequels, just because he "loves to work." When we did this interview, he had just been cast to star in *Aliens vs. Predator*, but even this didn't stop him taking on small films like *Madhouse* or *Mimic 3*. His thoughts on acting and life are very interesting, and listening to his inimitably dark voice on the phone was a real treat. Enjoy…

NICANOR LORETI *You've starred in a number of sequels. What do you think of movies that are sequels of bigger ones?*
LANCE HENRIKSEN Well, I believe that there's always the chance that a sequel could be better than the original. A good example of that is when we did *Aliens*. That sequel was as good as *Alien*, the first one. The thing is, if there are no big movies being made and somebody offers you a sequel, you say that it's fine, sure, and you'll try it, and try to do your best work. I always do my best no matter the movie. I never take a movie and just work to get by, I try to do the best I can every time. The only problem with sequels is that the people that are directing them or writing them, they are always trying to do another version of the original instead of taking some risks. Unless you take risks in movies, it's not worth watching them.

Of course, and Aliens *took a big risk.*
Yes, it did. My belief about acting in movies is that you have to take risks. Otherwise, why don't we just film people shopping in a supermarket [laughs]?

It's the same in every profession, I think.
Yes, it is. If you're taking a risk, something will happen. It's like giving things away. If you give something away, it comes back to you some other time.

You've just been cast in Aliens vs. Predator*...*
Right, in fact I'm traveling on October 15th to Prague.

And which character do you play? I know it's not Bishop...
No, but it's the man who created Bishop.

And what's it about?
Oh, I can't tell you. The thing is, they keep sending me new versions of it; it's going to be a very, very exciting movie, I promise you that. Let me tell you that I'm playing a billionaire in it and I'm responsible for taking this expedition. That's what I'm doing in the movie.

So tell me about the other Alien *movies.*

Well, the only value it has for me is that mostly when I'm acting I want to play my character in a certain way. And I realised that after *Alien* and after what Rutger Hauer did in *Blade Runner*, it would be very hard to play an android. These guys did such beautiful work, you know? Really beautiful work. So what I decided is that I wanted to play someone that was really me when I was twelve years old. Then I tried to do something that was personal for me and not to try to be me. So I did that, I thought of myself at twelve. There was some other stuff in there too, but that was mainly the essence of the character. That gave the character style. And for that reason, that movie is very special to me. And Jim Cameron, we'd been friends all along. We've been friends for years. He's a very professional man, very hard working and very focused. For me as an actor, the best thing is to get a part in which I can do a good work. I'm not out to be a star, I'm out to make the movie as best as I can, if they give me the chance.

What I love about your performances is that you give everything in every movie you're in. Among the ones I love are Stone Cold *and* Delta Heat.
Delta Heat was fun, yeah. In *Stone Cold* I had to do a lot of work to make that thing. But I love it, you know? I would love to go to Argentina and make a film. I've never been to Argentina. I would even learn Spanish to come. I really will. I know a little Spanish now, not much though. But if I had to come down and do a movie, I would learn Spanish.

Tell me more about Stone Cold.
Well, it was really an adventure. A lot happened during the making of that movie. One of the first things that happened was that they hired all these actors to play the bikers in my gang. And I asked the producer and the director to let me go get some more guys that could be real for these parts. So I went to all the workshops and looked around myself in Louisiana and hired guys right out of the real places. If I saw a guy that looked good enough to be in the movie, I'd hire him.

They do look like bikers in the movie.
Well, a lot of them were.

Even William Forsythe looks like one [laughs].
He always does.

And what was it like working with Brian Bosworth?
At the time, I thought he was like a young John Wayne. He was a very young guy, very apple pie... American apple pie kind of guy. But I liked him, we worked well together. He tried hard. That was his first movie and I think he did a good job in it. But, as my character, I knew he was a cop right away, and I thought, "Well, I'll just use him." He looked like a cop in a motorcycle outfit.

He acts like a cop too!
Yes, he does [laughs].

And what about Delta Heat*?*
That was one of my favourite movies to do, because I love New Orleans, and we shot it there. Louisiana is my favourite place. The people are very kind. You know, there's a big Spanish influence over there. There have been Spanish people for generations over there, and they have a great sense of humour. And I really wanted to play a Cajun hunter. The movie was a very, very low budget one. That movie cost almost nothing by today's standards; I think under a million dollars. And Anthony Edwards was cool. One time, they weren't giving any breakfast to the crew. And we decided these guys couldn't work all day with no breakfast! So Tony and I started a rebellion and hired a catering company to give everybody breakfast to embarrass the producers so they would feed these people. And it worked. Tony Edwards is a really nice guy. He's the one who was responsible for this.

You made a cool couple in the movie.
Yeah, it was like oil and vinegar. We go together but we don't mix [laughs].

I want to ask you about a favourite of mine that is, of course, Near Dark.
Oh, I love that movie. I really got lucky. Because I'm friends with Bill Paxton and we did like three movies together. And what happened was that there was such chemistry in that movie. There was a woman directing it, Kathryn Bigelow. And she would take any advice we would give her. So we had a really

good time. It was good ensemble, where everybody that came on with an idea, it was always accepted. In other movies, it's an automatic "no" most of the time. We had a great time. I bought a shotgun down there. We just got into it so deep. We didn't see the light of day because we shot the whole movie at night. Bill walked around with a black umbrella all the time and we lived in cheap motels most of the time. Because where we shot the movie it was almost in the middle of nowhere. So we all stayed in terrible, terrible motels. And we were really like living the characters all the time. We never got out of it. Bill Paxton and I almost get arrested once.

What did you do?
Well, we were driving. We just came from shooting, and were in a convertible driving over the tombstones because I thought that, if we lived forever, a lot of the guys we knew from the 1800s were buried and I wanted to go visit their graves. And we were dressed like in the movie, with the makeup and everything. So we were driving and I had this scar on my face and Bill had those shades. And we were speeding, so the cops pulled us over and they almost arrested us just because of the way we looked [laughs].

If I saw you like that, I would run away, not try to arrest you.
One of them almost drew his gun when I got out of the car. Billy looked at me and said "Lance, don't, don't, don't..." because he saw that I was going to play with the cop and do my character. He said: "Lance, don't, don't, don't do it" [laughs].

And what about Jeanette Goldstein? She's great in the movie too.
Oh, yeah. I love Jeanette. You know, right after that movie she went down to Central America and met a guy and then came back. But her career is happening again. She's getting busy again. She's a wonderful actress. I love her. I'm telling you, these people... This is a great way to make friends and the kind you keep for all of your life. We are all in the same generation. You, me, Bill Paxton, Jim Cameron, we're all in the same generation. When this is over, we're all over. It's a great thing we're all alive at the same time.

You did a movie with Billy Drago called The Outfit.

Yes, that movie was about Dutch Schultz.

He told me you shot your part in one week. Is it true?
Yes, it's true [laughs]. It was one of those times… At the time I had no money, so they asked me to come and do this movie. And I said OK [laughs]. Sometimes you just have to keep on working. This was one of them. I had no choice. In fact, when I got to New York — that's where we shot it — I asked what role I was playing. They sent me the script and I read the script and I asked if I was playing the FBI guy: "Who am I playing?" They said no, that I should play Dutch Schulz. And at the time I didn't know anything about Dutch Schulz. So they got me all the books, everything, that night, to my hotel room. I stayed up all night long reading about Dutch Schulz and the next morning I had one hour's sleep and we started shooting. So I did the best I could.

Anyway, the movie is not that bad…
I know, but consider it a miracle. It wasn't a week now that I think about it. I shot that movie, I think, in three days. My whole part. You just have to jump in with both feet. You know? It's like standing on a cliff. You say: "Ok, here I go!" [laughs] and see what happens.

Tell me about Jennifer 8*, with Andy Garcia. Cool movie.*
I liked it. Andy and I are still good friends. I just came back from Romania about five months ago and Andy was over there, too. He was shooting a movie on [Amedeo] Modigliani and years ago, almost twenty years ago, I wrote a script on Modigliani. So I gave Andy my original script to look at it, because he was working on a different version of it. And we talked a lot, and then he asked me if I wanted to be in it. So I did one scene where I played Charles Foster Kane. But Andy and I had a good time making *Jennifer 8*. I liked being in it. I like playing movies where I'm somebody's friend. It's a nice feeling, you know? Even as a bad guy. I think the reason *Near Dark* works is because the people really believe the whole family actually care for one another.

Tell me about your experience working on the tv series Millennium. *I wanted it to go on and on.*

Thank you. I wanted it to go on too, but let me tell you what the problem was. Now when you look at HBO, you see something like *The Sopranos*, you see all kinds of different shows. But there are things that you can't show or you can't say on the Fox Network, you know? It's so sanitised. And what I wanted *Millennium* to be always was something that reached you when the hour was over. The things we were doing in the show were about serial murderers, and these things don't get solved in an hour. They get solved over periods of years. And they lost sight. I think the reason the show was canceled was that the writers and everybody lost sight.

LANCE HENRIKSEN FILMOGRAPHY

2010
Cyrus
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 (vg, voice)
The Lost Tribe
Jennifer's Body (uncredited)
The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena (vg, voice)
Transformers: Animated (tv series)
Navy NCIS: Naval Criminal Investigative Service (tv series)
Screamers: The Hunting
The Seamstress
The Slammin' Salmon

2008
Necessary Evil
Transformers Animated: The Game (vg, voice)
Ladies of the House (tv)
Alone in the Dark II
Appaloosa
Dark Reel
Dying God
Deadwater
Prairie Fever
House (voice)
Pistol Whipped

2007
Mass Effect (vg, voice)
The Chosen One (voice)
Caminhos do Coração (tv series)
In the Spider's Web (tv)
My Cousin's Keeper
Bone Dry
Pumpkinhead: Blood Feud (tv)

2006
Pumpkinhead: Ashes to Ashes (tv)
Pirates of Treasure Island
Superman: Brainiac Attacks (voice)
The Da Vinci Treasure
Sasquatch Mountain
Abominable
The Garden
When a Stranger Calls (voice)
House at the End of the Drive

2005
Gun (vg, voice)
IGPX: Immortal Grand Prix (tv series)
Hellraiser: Hellworld
Supernova (tv)
A Message from Fallujah
Into the West (tv series)
Tarzan II (voice)
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go! (tv series)

2004
Starkweather
Aliens vs. Predator
Madhouse
One Point O

2003
Rapid Exchange

Mimic: Sentinel
The Invitation
The Last Cowboy (tv)

2002
A Man Called Rage
Antibody
Red Faction II
The Untold/Sasquatch

2002
Unspeakable
The Mangler 2
Lost Voyage (tv)

2001
Demons on Canvas

2000
Explosive Situations (tv)
Scream 3

1999
Harsh Realm (tv)
Tarzan (voice)

1998
The Day Lincoln Was Shot (tv)

1997
No Contest II

1996
Dusting Cliff 7
The Criminal Mind
Profile for Murder
Millennium (tv series)
Felony

1995
Aurora: Operation Intercept
Baja
Gunfighter's Moon
Nature of the Beast
The Outpost
Powder
Dead Man
The Quick and the Dead

1994
Boulevard
Spitfire
Color of Night
No Escape

1993
The Outfit
Knights
Man's Best Friend
Hard Target
Super Mario Bros
Excessive Force

1992
Delta Heat
Jennifer 8
Alien³

1991
Comrades in Arms
Two-Fisted Tales (tv)
Reason for Living: The Jill Ireland Story (tv)
Stone Cold

1990
The Last Samurai
The Pit and the Pendulum

1989
Survival Quest
Johnny Handsome
The Horror Show
Hit List
Pumpkinhead

1988
Deadly Intent

1987
Near Dark
Choke Canyon

1986
Aliens

1985
Savage Dawn
Streets of Justice (tv)
Jagged Edge

1984
The Terminator

1983
Nightmares
The Right Stuff
Blood Feud (tv)
A Question of Honor

1981
Piranha Part 2: The Spawning
Prince of the City
The Dark End of the Street

1979
The Visitor

1978
Damien: Omen II

1977
Close Encounters of the Third Kind
Mansion of the Doomed

1976
Network
The Next Man
Return to Earth (tv)

1975
Dog Day Afternoon

1974
To Kill the King

1972
It Ain't Easy

MICHAEL IRONSIDE

SCANNERS, V, VISITING HOURS, Extreme Prejudice… Michael Ironside has starred in all kinds of films. He's still active, with impressive turns in 2004's surprise cult film *The Machinist* and the miniseries *The Last Chapter*. He's a character actor whose mere presence is guaranteed to improve a movie. He's done B movies, A-list stuff, independent films, tv, action, horror, dramas like *Crime and Punishment in Suburbia*, and much more besides. His character Ham Tyler in the *V* series was one of the coolest in eighties tv and, along with his unbelievable performance in David Cronenberg's *Scanners*, made Ironside a landmark name for an entire generation (mine, of course). If you're a fan of character actors, you have to check out this guy's work; even the obscure titles are worth watching, like *Guncrazy*, starring Drew Barrymore (which also features a powerhouse performance by another *Cult People* interviewee, Billy Drago) or *The Vagrant*, starring Bill Paxton. He also made two great movies with Paul Verhoeven (one of the few remaining Hollywood directors with balls): *Total Recall* and *Starship Troopers*. Ironside's turn in the latter deserved an Oscar. Too bad the Academy doesn't consider movies about giant alien bugs when nominations come around…

NICANOR LORETI *One of my favourite characters of yours is Ham Tyler, from the* V *tv series with Marc Singer. How did you get cast in it, and did you enjoy the experience?*

MICHAEL IRONSIDE Yes, that was like twenty years ago, and I enjoyed the experience very much. The writer had written a film that I had done called *Visiting Hours*, so the producers asked me to meet with them and

offered me the part. The original character was in a wheelchair, and I told them I didn't wanna do that part. And they asked "Why?" and I said "Ironside, man." It was because the tv program *Ironside* was just like that. So they laughed and said: "Well, let's rewrite it," so I worked with the writer on the new character, and then I did it.

How different from film did you find acting for television?
Well, I lived in Canada and moved to the States in 1982, so *V* was basically my first job in the States. I had done one other job in Los Angeles before that, so it was my first exposure to American filmmaking and television.

I love that scene in Highlander II: The Quickening *where you drive the subway and you crash it — it's great!*
That was shot different times. We shot some things certain times and then we did other stuff. I think we spent almost a week on that scene and then we went and did all of the driving sequences somewhere else, and I think a month later we did all of the crash sequences. I think that was one of the most successful sequences on the film. It was a great collaboration with Russell Mulcahy, who was the director and the stunt coordinator**.** He was the one that created all of the action sequences and all the stunts in the film. He also directed the stunt shootings. He did all the second unit stuff. That was a very enjoyable film. It was too bad it ran into financial problems, they didn't completely finish what they wanted to do and I think it damaged the end product a lot. They ran over budget. If I remember right it was because the Austral (the local currency at the time) was fluctuating so much up and down the budget kept changing. The transfer from American dollars and English pounds to Australes kept changing over the period of four or five months we were there. I have very fond memories of that. That was a fun character.

You starred in a Canadian miniseries called The Last Chapter *in which you played a biker.*
Yeah, I played the guy who was the head of the National Biker Organization, a motorcycle gang in Canada. I think there's twelve hours of it out there. It was based on a lot of the biker wars that are going on in Canada and it was

done non Hollywood in a sense that we didn't have those traditional macho biker types. It was a business. And the story is about how this biker rises to the head of the National Biker Organization and gets filthy, filthy rich and how he subsequently falls and ends up dying. It's kind of the rise and fall of the king of the bikers.

Do you usually research when you have to play a character like that? Or you just suppose how he would be in real life?
Well, this time the writing was very, very well researched and the screenwriter had already done all the research and we were literally telling what was going on in the streets. We were just like four months ahead of what was going on in real life. So almost all of the research was done by the writer and the producers. I did some of my own, but it was very well written. A lot of people said "Well, this isn't the bikers." Many people think of bikers the way they see them in Hollywood movies, doing wheelies down the streets and throwing people through windows. This was actually about the drug business, the prostitution, gambling, the domestic life of these people, how they were taken down, the constant fighting. It's a lot like *Richard III*, stuff like that. The rise to power of somebody within a very powerful organisation. It probably would have been just as successful if it was about a large corporation and the main character was a guy that rises from the mail room to be CEO of an organisation — it's very similar. You know, it's all about power and how power corrupts. And I was very, very pleased with it; it was really successful in Canada. I don't know if it'll be as successful in the United States. They don't recognise it, they see it as too domestic, it's not what they think of as sellable, it doesn't have a lot of edgy Hollywood violence. The violence is much closer to reality and far away from what's cinematic. And a lot of people love it when they see it; in Europe it did very well, in Italy, in Spain, in France. In Canada it was well received. Biker gangs around the world are one of the top crime organisations there are, and nobody really pays attention to them.

Yeah, in Argentina too.
They basically run all the street traffic of drugs, they have a lot of influence and a lot of money. It was great, because all the cast, all the writing, all the

producers and all the money came out of Canada. It's not *The Sopranos*, you know?

Yeah, violence doesn't look cool. I get it.
Yes, we don't spend a lot of time making the violence look cinematic and stuff like that. You see a lot of it, but they are very, very clumsy, very ill-equipped, have a lot of character defects and don't know how to trust and don't know how to operate a society. I remember when I did it, the first episode, someone was interviewing me and asked me: "Aren't you too old to play a biker?" It was an American journalist and I said: "Well, you obviously don't know the biker world." Most of the guys, about the time they get to power, are not under their fifties. The guy I play in real life, I don't wanna say his name because I'm legally not allowed to, I play one character that is really two others that we rolled into one. Well, he's a guy who never really rode a motorcycle. He basically ran around in a Cadillac and a SUV and stuff like that. The motorcycle street stuff was all done by other thugs. If you get a chance to see it, you should see it.

I know you directed some movies too.
Yeah, I've directed a couple of times. I just wanted to see what it was like. After all these years, I know enough, I'm comfortable as a director but it's a lot of work. As an actor, I can make an awful lot of money in a year, as a director it takes a lot of dedication. But I think as I get older and stuff like that, in ten years or so I'll end up more behind the camera than I will in front of it.

Which directors you worked with influenced your style as a director?
Oh, all of them. I don't think there's anyone in particular. What I like about being a director is that you get to plan it all and see it happen. You get to be in control of everything and to make sure your plan had worked before you go into postproduction. I'm not just an actor; I've also written. I refer to it all as 'the circus' — I'm a circus guy. I love everything that has to do with this job, but I have a soft part in my heart for acting. There's something gratifying about the character and watching it work on the screen, being able to work within a director's format. And there's a little bit less responsibility. It's wonderful to bring all of these pieces together and watch them come

together in front of you and work. It's a lot like a family; it feels like being a good father or a good mother. It gives you a lot of joy and satisfaction, and it's a lot of stress, the same as being a parent.

You've done lots of action movies. One of my favourites is Extreme Prejudice*, directed by Walter Hill.*
That was great, because I remember it was my first time playing what I call 'majorly involved'. It was the first American film where I had a full lead and there I was with Rip Torn and Powers Boothe and Walter Hill and John Milius. I mean, I looked around and I thought: "Oh, God! I'm here!" At that time, I had already done like sixty films but I remember one day, very early in the film, looking around and going "Oh, my God, I'm here! I can't fuck up!" I remember saying to Walter Hill, "Jesus, I'm in the big leagues," and he said, "Yeah, where did you think you were?" And I said: "Well, I think I've always assumed that one day somebody is gonna find out who I am and send me home." He told me, "Well, I feel like that every time I start working on a film. It always takes me a couple of days to get my confidence back." That was a great experience. It's like going to bat in the major leagues, play baseball. Only this time the pitchers are going to be different, because the uniforms are different and the quality of the stars is different but it really comes down to a guy throwing a fast ball and if you get it, you hit it out of the ball park. Same ball, same game, different players. But it was really, really great. I think I allowed myself the acknowledgement of being there. It took me about a day or so to go, "Of course I should be here!"

The ending pays homage to The Wild Bunch. *Walter Hill even wrote some films for Peckinpah. Did he mention* The Wild Bunch *while making the movie?*
Yeah, Walter basically was a big fan of Sam Peckinpah. And, for example, somebody on the set asked him about the *48 Hrs.* "Why does this guy ride a 69 Cadillac in *48 Hs.* ?" Walter looks around and says: "Does anyone know the answer to that question?" And I say: "I do." And he says: "What's the answer?" And I say: "Because that's Junior Bonner's car." Junior Bonner was a character in a Sam Peckinpah movie.

Yeah, Steve McQueen.
Yeah, and in it he drove a 69 Cadillac. That's why he chose that car in *48 Hrs.* — because that's Junior Bonner's car. Walter smiled and said: "Well, that's exactly right." A lot of the violent scenes in *Extreme Prejudice* were done in homage to *The Wild Bunch* and to Sam Peckinpah. It was a way to make violence not look pretty. You know, it's not pretty when somebody gets shot with a gun or gets stabbed. Violence is not always an orchestrated dance sequence. He wanted to make it as brutal as possible. And I think at that time both films were talking about American foreign policy and I think Walter tried to put a bit of that in it. The brutality of reality coming home and stuff. It wasn't well received at the box office. That's a good film! I wonder why it didn't do better?

Another action movie you did, that is pretty different, is McBain*, with Christopher Walken. That one had a good cast, what happened?*
That's one of the few films I wish I never did. The script was very, very good, the cast was very good, they had enough money and when I basically took it the script was about broken people who had been lied to in the past and felt used. They go to people for help to get rid of their ghosts of the past. The director at the time kept screwing with the script while we were shooting and changing things and in the end it turned out to be just a bad version of kind of the American A-Team goes and saves all the brown skinned people. And I felt bad about it. We all basically shook our heads and realised that the person in charge was not as talented and did not have as much understanding of the material as we did. And we were just glad that it was over. I made a lot of friends on that film, assistants and stuff like that. I made like four or five really close friends on that film. The actual film itself was a disappointment. It turned out to be a waiting pool, about twenty feet deep.

You also did this Dean Koontz movie, Watchers. *That was another first time director, right?*
Yeah, John Hess. It was an OK experience, there wasn't a lot of time and money and I think that the end product was pretty good considering the material and the time and the money. Roger Corman was involved and I had never worked with Roger. The guy is a master of the independent low

budget genre and I wanted to see what would be different working with him and around him. And at that time I remember it was going to be shot in Vancouver, Canada, and I wanted to be home. I thought it would be nice to go home to Canada and work with friends. That was a very enjoyable project.

You also worked with Michael Pare.
Yeah, that was once again a first-time director. When I worked with him it was in South Africa. The director and executive producer of the film was Bob Misiorowski. He had been an executive in charge of *Watchers* and had been around when we were doing *Total Recall*, and it was his first time as a director. He asked me if I could do it and I said "Sure." The cool thing about that film was that I got to fly to South Africa. I had a choice between doing a film in Chicago or going to South Africa, so I chose to go to South Africa because I wanted to go and see what it was like. It's the great thing about this job, that I got to go and see places, like I did in Buenos Aires. It's way better than being a tourist, because you get to meet people and see how they are and experience their culture. For me, it's one of the joys of being able to go around the world to do films.

Did you ever work with somebody that influenced you and defined the way you wanted to be as an actor?
No, not really. I've had the same teacher for thirty years, she's still my teacher. Her name is Jeanine and she came out of the Actor's Studio in the fifties and sixties. She's a highly professional woman, who taught me that it was my job to be prepared and never make my work anybody else's problem. She has full credit for my professionalism and experience. Because of her I had much more experience than I should have when I just started. I don't have an actor that influenced me, really. I only got a couple of English films I admired, starring people like Albert Finney, people like that. Their level of professionalism and their boldness to create characters is something I've always aspired to. I'm just really grateful to be in the circus. Like I said, I'm a circus guy and I really like it. I'm very lucky and very fortunate.

MICHAEL IRONSIDE FILMOGRAPHY

2010
The Bannen Way

2009
Eva
Hardwired
The Beacon
Cold Case (tv series)
The Jazzman
Level 26: Dark Origins
The Butcher
Terminator Salvation
Wolverine and the X-Men (tv series)
Abduction of Jesse Bookman

2008
Mutants
Criminal Minds (tv series)
Storm Cell (tv)
Surveillance
The Alphabet Killer
The Terrorist Next Door (tv)

2007
TimeShift (vg, voice)
Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars (vg)

2006
The Veteran (tv)
Masters of Horror (episode: The V Word, tv)
Splinter Cell: Double Agent (vg, voice)
Justice League (2003-06, tv series)
Splinter Cell: Essentials (vg, voice)
Stargate SG-1 (tv series)
Disaster Zone: Volcano in New York (tv)
Desperate Housewives (2005-06, tv series)

2005
Core: Boiling Point (tv)
Guy X
Deepwater
Bloodsuckers (tv)
Fisher
Reeker

2004
The Red Phone: Checkmate (tv)
Sam Fisher
The Machinist

2003
The Failures
The Last Chapter II: The War Continues (tv series)
Alaska (tv)
Hemingway vs. Callaghan (tv)
Maximum Velocity

2002
Fairytales and Pornography
Fallen Angels
Le Dernier Chapitre: La Suite (tv series)

2001
Extreme Honor
Dead Awake
Soulkeeper
Children of the Corn: Revelation
Jett Jackson: The Movie (tv)
Down
Mindstorm
Ignition
The Red Phone: Manhunt (tv)

2000
Nuremberg (tv series)
The Perfect Storm
Heavy Metal 2000
Crime and Punishment in Suburbia
Borderline Normal
Cause of Death

1999
The Omega Code
A Twist of Faith
Question of Privilege
The Arrangement
Southern Cross

1998
Desert Blue
Johnny 2. 0 (tv)
Going to Kansas City
Death Row the Tournament
Voyage of Terror (tv)
Ivory Tower
Chicago Cab
Black Light
Captive

1997
One of Our Own
Starship Troopers
Cold Night into Dawn
The Arrow (tv)

1996
Terminal (tv)
The Destiny of Marty Fine
One Way Out
Portraits of a Killer

1995
Major Payne
Kids of the Round Table
Singapore Sling: Road to Mandalay (tv)
Too Fast Too Young

1994
Probable Cause (tv)
The Glass Shield
The Next Karate Kid

Dead Man's Revenge (tv)
Bolt
The Killing Machine
Red Scorpion 2
Tokyo Cowboy

1993

Red Sun Rising
Father Hood
Free Willy
Night Trap
Sweet Killing
Marked for Murder (tv)
Forced to Kill
Fortunes of War
Point of Impact
Save Me

1992

Café Romeo
Guncrazy
The Vagrant
Black Ice
Killer Image
Neon City

1991

McBain
Deadly Surveillance (tv)
Drop Dead Gorgeous (tv)
Highlander II: The Quickening

1990

Total Recall
Chaindance
Destiny to Order
Payback

1989

Murder by Night (tv)
Mindfield

1988

Watchers
One Boy, One Wolf, One Summer (tv)
Hostile Takeover

1987

Hello Mary Lou: Prom Night II
Ford: The Man and the Machine (tv)
Race for the Bomb (tv series)
Extreme Prejudice
Nowhere to Hide

1986

Top Gun
Jo Jo Dancer, Your Life Is Calling

1985

Murder in Space (tv)
The Falcon and the Snowman
V (series)
The Surrogate

1984

V: The Final Battle (tv series)
Coming Out Alive

1983

Cross Country
The Sins of Dorian Gray (tv)
Spacehunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone
American Nightmare

1982

Visiting Hours
Best Revenge

1981

Surfacing
Scanners
The July Group (tv)
Suzanne
I, Maureen
Clown White (tv)

1980

Double Negative

1979

The Family Man (tv)
Stone Cold Dead
Summer's Children

1978

HighBallin'
The Last Campaign

1977

Outrageous!

BILL MCKINNEY

IF YOU'VE SEEN *DELIVERANCE*, you'll already know who Bill McKinney is. He was recently voted 'Number One Villain of All Time' for his performance in that film, a dubious but deserved honour! Besides that, Bill has had an impressive career alongside lots of cool stars like Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson and Ben Johnson.

He started out working as a tree surgeon before becoming an actor and having roles in A and B movies for more than thirty years. He worked with Peckinpah in *Junior Bonner*, Eastwood in *Bronco Billy*, Stallone in *First Blood*, Jodie Foster in *Carny*, John Hudson and more. He's one of those Hollywood survivors, and hearing about his experiences can teach you a lot about staying sane in a crazy business. He's still active too, and recently you might have spotted him in *Looney Tunes Back in Action* and *The Green Mile* (alongside Tom Hanks). Bill is one in a million, and his stories, whether about characters like Ben Johnson or his own life, are truly interesting, as well as testifying to the fact that he's one of Hollywood's genuine wildmen. In fact, since Don Stroud has retired, Bill might be the last rebel out there.

NICANOR LORETI *You used to work as a tree surgeon, right?*
BILL MCKINNEY Yeah, long before I went into the Actor's Studio. And then back again for a while.

You were in several movies along with Clint Eastwood. Among them, The Outlaw Josey Wales, Bronco Billy, Thunderbolt and Lightfoot...

I did several movies with Mr Eastwood. He's a wonderful man to work with...

He directed you in Bronco Billy*, for instance. What's he like as a director?*
Yeah, he directed *Bronco Billy* and starred in it. That was a different kind of movie for him, and the public at first didn't accept that too much, but it came off as a long run afterwards. It did well in the long run. I can tell you, most of the movies I've been in made money. That's everything I've done, I don't think I've ever been in a loser movie [laughs].

That's more than we can say about most of the actors nowadays.
Well, it is what it is. It does have something to do with me as much as it does have something to do with the circumstances. I don't see it as a coincidence that I just happened to be in all these movies that made money. It has to do with the contribution between the people involved. But also you have to consider that there always was good material, good execution by the director, the way they cut it and so on and so on. I've been very fortunate in my working life, I'll put it that way.

What do you have to see in a script to accept a part in a movie? What goes through your mind?
Well, the characters... The story must have a lot to do with human nature. Then I can relate to it. Even if it happens to do with human nature I don't really agree with. For the most part, everybody thinks they're right. So, if you get yourself in a situation, if you can relate to the situation where a person thinks he's right, then everything this person does, this character does, is related to his logic. And you make that your logic for the time being, for the duration of the character that you're playing, and that's your logic. So everything falls into place once you make it logical. The emotional will follow the logic.

Thunderbolt and Lightfoot *was directed by Michael Cimino. It was his first movie right?*
Aha. He wrote that. He wrote it and he directed it too. And the part that I played in it, that he told me to do, was totally off the wall and had nothing

to do with the movie; it just was a funny part. So I fashioned it to be like an actor, a guy I knew from Frenchtown, Georgia. A guy that I pretty much grew up with. So I decided to play it like it was him. I told it to Jeff Bridges when I first got into the car and he said, "That is a great part," and we asked Michael if we could do it. And he said, "I didn't write it, but do it anyway." So yes, that character was a person that I actually knew, which happens quite a bit when you take people from your life… Michael Cimino wrote that, and he did a good job with the direction too. And he also cast me in another film of his which was called *Heaven's Gate*, with Kris Kristofferson. That time, we had trouble with the negotiation and I didn't do it. Tom Skerritt finally did it. That's the way that goes, but Michael is a really talented man.

Yeah, I love a lot of his movies. The Deer Hunter *is a true classic.*
Oh, God, yes! That was one of the best movies Robert DeNiro ever did. There's this outstanding scene between Robert DeNiro and Christopher Walken doing that Russian roulette thing.

That scene is amazing.
It really is.

I've loved Christopher Walken's work ever since.
Yeah, he does wonderful work in that movie.

Yeah, and it's a shame Michael Cimino hasn't had a lot of luck lately, Hollywood has changed a lot since. Maybe there's no more room for maverick directors like him?
Yeah, maybe. I don't know what happened to Michael since I went down and met him for the last time for that part in *Heaven's Gate*. He had already cast me for that part, and the negotiation blew it all. And I haven't talked to him since, but he's talented and very good, that I can assure you. I just don't know exactly what has happened to him. In this town, you kinda stay with what you're doing or the group you're with, you're out of the loop or whatever, you go from one family to another. You just have to keep on working.

Maybe Michael just got tired of Hollywood? Thunderbolt and Lightfoot *also featured Gary Busey, right? You also were with him in* Carny.
Yeah, I worked with Gary Busey in *Carny*.

Jodie Foster was in it too, right?
Yeah, and Gary I remembered from *Thunderbolt*...

What was he like?
Well, Gary is a good actor. He's had trouble throughout his career with one thing or another, but he's a strong man, and keeps on coming back. And he's OK now, he had to fight cancer, and it looks like he's been doing well and resting and he's back working again. I haven't heard from him lately, but it looks like he's doing all right. But he's great actor and a very talented man.

And what about Jodie Foster? She was really young at the time.
Oh, yeah. Jodie is one of the hardest working people I've ever seen in my life. After *Carny*, years ago, she started working at the gym where I work out. She was always a hard worker, and I saw her training at the gym before she went to do this part in *The Silence of the Lambs*. She was working like a dog. And after she went to do this, she went to this FBI school for training, where they train you for combat. And she was really into that part, even won an Oscar for it. I remember Jodie as very self-confident, very hard working. She has that confidence because she works hard, and she deserves everything she's gotten. And I think it's because of that self-confidence she won the Oscar. I really respect her attention to detail, her tenacity and her originality. I can't say enough good things about her.

Please, tell me about your work with Sam Peckinpah in Junior Bonner.
Yeah, I did that movie with him. He was also a very good and talented man. He was really good to work with, he was a good teacher. It was a time when I did three great movies with amazing directors in a row. I worked with John Boorman first in *Deliverance*, then worked with Sam Peckinpah in *Junior Bonner* right after that, and then with John Huston right after that. And that's nothing but blind luck! That's the way I feel sometimes.

What were the main differences between Peckinpah and Boorman as directors?
There were many. Sam was a very different director than John. He had all that violence in him. He was cutting *Straw Dogs* right when we did *Junior Bonner*. He was cutting *Straw Dogs* at night and shooting this movie on the day. And he's pushing himself so hard, you know, I think that just made him more cranky [laughs]. But he still did a good job in *Junior Bonner*; it was a good film.

It's one of his best — underrated, though.
He was a good director. You know, when a person overworks himself they lose their humour, they lose their patience and they get crankier. That's what they get. You know, when they're hungry and tired and stressed up they just get cranky. But he still did a great job, so I give him a lot of credit. I don't have anything bad to say about him. He was a good man. He did *The Getaway* right after that, another one with Steve [McQueen].

Working with Steve McQueen must have been quite an experience?
Hell, yeah. Steve was a good man. I learned a lot from him because he was an Actor's Studio man. He was as good as any of the Actor's Studio people. They are all good, exceptional actors. There was something very special about him, and I learned a lot during that shooting. I hung out with him, and he would tell me a few things. He said: "Relax, breathe in-between the lines, don't act false or ambitious." In other words, play bike a little bit more. That was basically what he was saying to me, because I had the tendency to really be an eager beaver in those days [laughs]. I loved him, he was a good man. And it was a very pleasant experience, too. Bob Preston was in that movie, Joe Don Baker was in it, and all of these people. Ben Johnson too. Ben was great, you know. I did three movies with him.

So you got along with him?
Ben Johnson was one of the most wonderful people you ever saw in your life. Man, he was so full of stories. He was from Oklahoma, and he came down and worked for John Ford in *The Wagon Masters*. He rode horses down there in Oklahoma. He told this story about how he saved this stagecoach

that had run away one day. He saved four passengers, a driver and a shotgun, the horses and the stagecoach. They were headed for a cliff, and the driver lost control of the horses and they were gonna crash and it was going to kill everybody. Ben gets on, takes control of the horses and leads them, and John Ford says: "Ben, you'll be rewarded today." Ben said: "Well, I thought he was talking about more wrangling work." Two weeks later he calls him into his office and he had a contract there for $5,000 a week for fifty two weeks a year. John Ford said: "Well, here's your contract, you might want your lawyer to take a look at it." Ben says: "I don't need a lawyer, I need a pimp" [laughs]. He was full of stories like that. He was a great guy. I loved Ben; he was one of the finest men I met in this business.

And what about Deliverance*? How did you get your part in that movie?*
Well, sometimes you read for them, and sometimes you just walk in and they talk to you like John Huston did. I'll tell you a little bit about John Huston. When I worked for him, I just walked in and he told me about the part and asked me if I'd like to do it. Sometimes, you can't win for a part, sometimes you work for it, you live for it and all that, and sometimes it just falls into your lap. It's really a varying thing. Sometimes it's highly competitive and when you get it you feel like you are on top of the world, and other times you do nothing and you get the part anyway. It just varies. Basically what I do is I keep myself in good mental and physical condition. I take care of my health; I'm always doing physical stuff. And I focus the acting part in terms of people, in terms of human nature, and I work on it all the time. It's always on my mind. The most important thing is human nature in terms of acting, and that's the way I approach it.

And what about that famous scene, where you rape and terrorise Ned Beatty and Jon Voight? How did you prepare for that scene? It's pretty scary stuff.
OK, I'll tell you what happened. When I was a kid, I moved from Tennessee to Georgia. Flintstone was the name of the town. And the guys in Georgia used to beat me up and tell me: "You Tennessee son of a bitch" and kick my back and creepy stuff like this. So, when I did *Deliverance* I just turned it around: I was in their shoes and Ned was in mine [laughs]. Of course, it was

a different situation, because the setting was different. But when somebody's spirit is mean and it tells them to do whatever they wanna do, that's just the way it is. And I knew these people. I've known bootleggers in my life, because I've worked with my buddy down on the river. They used to buy engines from his father, who had a houseboat down there. So I got to know bootleggers, and how they thought, and then I met people down in Georgia... Basically, doing this thing was tough. It was hot and humid down there, and it was insane. But with Ned, I was very careful. In the time of being violent with him, I was also trying to protect him. It's a two way thing: you can't really lose control, and you have to let the violence out to make the scene work. But you can't hurt the person that's working with you. So it was difficult. At one point in this scene, when I was riding him across the ground like a pig, I fell off and said: "Wow! Looks like we got us a sow here instead of a boar!" I was so tired, because I had to wrestle him across that hill and all that, and it was so humid that I couldn't get my breath. I was in good shape, I was running five miles a day, but up there, with the lack of oxygen in the air, and with so much humidity, it was really tough. So, in the middle of the scene, I had to do it, to get off and kick back and say it. In that little bit of time, it was just a little thing, but I had to do it, because I would have died otherwise and passed out. In that time I recovered and he [Boorman] kept it in. There were a lot of things that happened in that scene that he kept in. When I say to them: "I require..." — that was not in the script. I said: "We require you to get your goddamn ass up in those woods," you know? And a lot of things that we said were kept in, like "Did he bleed?" [laughs]. That was completely out of the blue. I didn't expect that to happen, because I was thinking about the lines. And "He bled!" It was full of stuff like that.

It's all that stuff that makes it more real.

Yeah, it does, absolutely. And the director, I got to say that John Boorman is one of the most talented people that you'll ever work with. I mean this man is a stone genius. He really is. He can talk about human nature; he can get the dark part of it and scare you to death. In so many ways, he's got this naïve thing. He's like a child in many ways and yet he can really scare you. It's such an amazing talent to be able to go on that direction, and he's a great

man with the camera too. Anyway, it was a labor of love for all of us, cast and crew, that movie.

I read you were voted 'Number One Villain of All Time' in Maxim *Magazine.*
Yeah. And there was also a television show, I think it aired on A&E, I didn't happen to see it, but they voted me the number one villain of all time. It's amazing how it sticks in peoples' minds after all these years. It's a complement for all of us, for all the talent in the movie. And especially to me, of course. And originally in that movie, I was up for the part of Lewis, the part that Burt did. It's strange it got cast that way [laughs]. I even went to New York and auditioned for it. I did a screen test in New York and thought: "Man, I got this part nailed." But as it turned out, they already had Ned and Ronny Cox, who had never done anything, and were both really good actors. And they needed at least a name. So it turned out this way, and it's a good way, because I'm still enjoying the notoriety of it.

A lot of notoriety!
Yeah, and it still extends its payoff, because people I meet there on the gym or anywhere, they still talk about that part. Kids in junior high school talk about that part. I don't understand but I'm not unhappy about it. Notoriety is good.

Of course, I mean you're known around the world. I'm in Argentina and I've heard about you because of Deliverance.
In Argentina, huh?

Yeah.
There was this heavyweight fighter from Argentina who once fought Ali. He was a good man. I also knew Fernando Lamas [Argentina-born American actor and director] and his son.

Lorenzo…
Lorenzo, right. Fernando was a good man; I worked with him a couple of times.

He was married to Esther Williams, right?
Yes, they were married, and I met her one day. And I went down to his house, because I was still doing trees when I worked with him. So he asked me to go to his house and look at his trees, and he said: "Esther, come meet Bill!" [laughs]. She comes up and she's a nice lady, and shook my hand and almost broke it. She didn't mean to, but she was a strong woman… She was very impressive, a very nice lady. And then I worked with his son in a show. I also met another man from Argentina, his name was Luis De Prietes, he was Mr Universe 1986, I think. I've always liked Argentina, the men out there seem to have a nobility of acting, and I like that. The guy who fought Ali used to work out in the same gym I did in LA. A lot of great fighters used to work out there, like Sonny Liston, for example. It was a big boxing gym. The men I've met from Argentina like Fernando Lamas and his son, they have this kind of macho thing, but it's a good macho thing.

You also were in Angel Unchained*, with Don Stroud.*
That was my second movie.

And what was the experience like?
I almost got killed. The place where we were recording the dialogue blew up, and I hadn't stepped that much into production yet, and it nearly took my life. It took me a while to recover from that, but I still enjoyed doing the movie. John Madden I believe was the director on that. That was an interesting movie, because I had done tree work and my balance felt good, I got a little cocky with that motorcycle and lost control of it one day. I did a wheelie and I was out of control, so when I came down I wasn't still all the way on the ground when I hit this car. I hit it with my shoulder… The stunt men thought I was dead. Two of the stunt men that were there that day who thought I was dead, are now dead. And I'm still alive. An ironic thing this life is, huh [laughs]? That's how it goes! That movie was crazy, and the next one I did right after that was *Deliverance*. It took me a lot to recover. Let me think, I did this movie in April '69 and *Deliverance* was in '72, so I spent some time recovering. And then I was back on the trees. And then I got into the Actor's Studio and then I did *Deliverance*. So, *Angel Unchained* can be called the beginning, it was definitely one of the beginning movies.

Please, tell me about The Shootist.
Oh, I did that movie with John Wayne. He was really a very interesting man to work with. He was really a tough man; he was honest, he was strong and he was a great teacher, because he had a great technique. He piled so much technique over a long period of years, that if you paid attention and didn't let him intimidate you, you could learn a lot. He was a good man, strong but cranky at some points because he wanted it to be his way, but most of the time he was 100% right. He also was an excellent technician and a better actor than people ever gave him credit for. Mostly people blamed John Wayne for just being John Wayne... Well, Marlon Brando is Marlon Brando, Robert DeNiro is Robert DeNiro and Bill McKinney is Bill McKinney, so we are all ourselves, but still get in front of a camera and do work. So, you are always yourself. Everybody is. One day, he almost had a fight with me. Turns out he was trying to get me pissed off, because we had a confrontation scene, and he finally did, so when we did the scene I was spitting fire. Later, he would call me up, he would say: "Hey come over here!" So I would go, and he said: "I love the way you read those lines!" [laughs]. So then I knew he'd done it on purpose. That was his way of working and it was very effective, because it made it real.

That must have been quite a lesson in how to deal with people in movies.
Oh, yes, and a very valuable one, because when you work with people like this you're getting thirty four years of experience. And it's always been a pleasure for me to work with people like him. It's never been intimidating, I've always looked to them as people who I have a lot of respect for. And the experience I've had working with those people, like in the Actor's Studio, on the set, the directors and the actors and even people behind the cameras. I've learned great stuff.

In Breakheart Pass*, you co-starred with Charles Bronson. What was that experience like?*
Breakheart Pass... It was good to work in that one too. Again, there was Ben Johnson, and there was Charlie Bronson and his wife. So many good people, and Archie Moore, who had just come back from Zaire, where he had been training George Foreman when he fought Ali. He was also in the movie,

which was directed by a guy called Tommy Bries. He directed Ali in a movie after that and he worked so hard that he died of a heart attack right after that. Tommy was a good man; he was a very interesting guy. I liked Tommy. *Breakheart Pass* was another good movie because Ben Johnson was always telling these stories and keeping the morale up [laughs]! I can't say enough good things about him, and Richard Crenna was also always telling jokes, and Charlie Durning too. Charlie Bronson was the most serious of the bunch, but a good man nonetheless. He was serious, but right on it all the time. But most people that play leads on movies, they have more work to do than the character actors, so they have to stay on to all the time. They have to keep on studying the script all the time to stay on target. He was great to work with and, as I've said before, all that experience that you get from working with these guys, it's invaluable.

And you did First Blood.
I was in that, yes. We shot it up in Canada. I think that was [Sylvester] Stallone's first movie after *Rocky*. He seemed to be a nice guy. People had a lot of stories about him. He was this way, not the other and all that, but he was a nice guy. He was a very respectful man and had a lot of guts. It takes a lot to do what he did. This guy, he wrote *Rocky*, and I hung out with his makeup man, who told me a lot about his life. About how they wanted James Caan to play the lead in *Rocky*, and was broke and fought for it. Stallone said: "No, I'm not gonna do it." They gave him $150,000 dollars, and he said "I don't care how much you give me, I'm gonna do it." And that's what made him a star. He had faith in his conviction, and that's why he did it.

And what was it like making First Blood*?*
The first one is good. It was the most real of all of them. He broke a couple of wrists doing that, did you know? You know when he falls off the trees? Well, he did it himself and broke a couple of wrists then. It takes a lot of courage to do that. Of course, you have to do it because you're committed to the movie. All in all, it's not easy.

Of all the movies you've done, which one are you especially fond of?

Well, I would say *The Outlaw Josey Wales* is one of my favourites. And *Deliverance* has to be one of my favourites too. There are so many, *The Shootist* is another, *Bronco Billy*... It's hard to pick the best. I've had such a fortunate work life; I really couldn't pick only one of 'em. Like I've said, I've been in a lot of good movies.

And which one do you like the least?
A movie called *Deadly Honeymoon*, which I was fired from. That was really a bad experience.

BILL McKINNEY FILMOGRAPHY

2009
Fuel

2008
Pride and Glory

2007
Ghost Town: The Movie
Lucky You
Take

2006
The Bliss
The Devil Wears Spurs
The Garage

2005
2001 Maniacs

2004
Undertow

2003
Looney Tunes: Back in Action
Hellborn
True Legends of the West

2002
Mending Fences

2000
Paradise

1999
The Green Mile
Where's Marlowe?

1996
It Came from Outer Space 2
A Promise to Carolyn (tv)

1995
Lone Justice 2

1994
City Slickers II: The Legend of Curly's Gold

1993
Love, Cheat & Steal (tv)
Ned Blessing: The Story of My Life and Times (tv series)

1992
Baywatch: River of No Return (tv)

1990
Back to the Future Part III
The China Lake Murders (tv)

1989
Pink Cadillac
Kinjite: Forbidden Subjects

1988
War Party
Under the Gun

1984
Final Justice
Master Ninja I
Against

1983
Heart like a Wheel
All Odds

1982
First Blood
Tex

1981
St. Helens
Bret Maverick (tv)

1980
Carny
Any Which Way You Can
Bronco Billy

1979
When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?

1977
The Gauntlet
Christmas Miracle in Caulfield, U.S. A. (tv)
Valentino

1976
The Shootist
Cannonball
The Outlaw Josey Wales

1975
Breakheart Pass
The Family Holvak (tv series)
Strange New World (tv)

1974
This Is the West That Was (tv)
The Godchild (tv)
The Strange and Deadly Occurrence (tv)
Thunderbolt and Lightfoot
For Pete's Sake
The Parallax View
The Outfit
The Healers
The Underground Man (tv)
The Execution of Private Slovik (tv)
Columbo: Swan Song (tv)

1973
Cleopatra Jones

1972
The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean
Junior Bonner
Deliverance

1971
Alias Smith and Jones (tv)

1970
Angel Unchained

1969
The Road Hustlers

1968
Firecreek

1967
She Freak

PAUL NASCHY

PAUL NASCHY IS ONE of the main reasons the horror genre still exists in Spain. His first film showed the local producers that people wanted to see horror stories made in their own country — and that they could be successful. His portrayal of the doomed wolfman Waldemar Daninsky turned Naschy into a global horror icon; he's a cult legend even in Japan. Naschy (real name Jacinto Molina) worked in almost every genre: from strictly horror flicks (*La Noche de Walpurgis*) to comedies (*Rojo Sangre*), giallos (*House of Psychotic Women*) to dramas (*La Gran Vida*). Sadly, he succumbed to pancreatic cancer earlier this year, but managed to maintain his high standards right up to the end of his career, and the relatively recent *Rojo Sangre*, about a psychotic actor who's had enough of the industry's bullshit, was a case in point: Naschy's unique characterisation in this film makes it a good introduction to his movies. A maverick and genuine cult film superstar, his career was blessed from day one (after all, he started out working for Nicholas Ray). And who doesn't love those werewolf movies?F

NICANOR LORETI *How did you decide to become an actor? I know you had studied architecture before...*

PAUL NASCHY Yes, I went to the university first. But I was also an art fan, I used to paint and draw, and even did some expos of my work. For instance, I drew the covers for the first Elvis records that were issued in Spain, and also Bill Haley's and Frankie Valli's. I also worked for Columbia Records, and even did covers for some books.

When was the key moment?
Well, I was a movie fan, especially sci fi and horror films. In my career, though, I've made all kinds of movies: dramas, comedies, peplum, whatever. Everything started when I was very young. Once, I went to see *Frankenstein vs. the Wolfman*, starring Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney Jr. I was very surprised by the movie, and instantly loved it. It's a movie I never forgot. In time, I had a series of family troubles, because I started saying that my future was in the movie business. Obviously, at the time, in bourgeois type families, the movie business was not an alternative. They wanted me to be an architect and to have a career, so filmmaking was not an option. On the other hand, I was a very respected athlete in my country; I even went to several competitions and to the Olympics. When I was a student, they hired me as an extra in Nicholas Ray's *King of Kings*, which was shot in Spain. At the time, a lot of great Hollywood films were shot here in Spain. My love of filmmaking started to grow. I started doing small parts in movies, first as a hobby and then started thinking of it as work. But that was my first contact with the world of filmmaking. On the other hand, it was the time of the post-war in Spain and there wasn't much you could do to have fun. One of them was cinema and the other one was reading comics. I decided that I wanted to make movies for a living. At first, I tried to get work as a set decorator, which was truly crazy because in Spain there aren't many set decorators and it was impossible to get any work without knowing anybody in the industry. I used to draw really well and I tried to get a little work, but then I started working on the production area and right after, as an assistant director.

How did you get from those early jobs to making your own movies?
One day I asked myself why there weren't any genre movies in Spain. I had an idea: it would be great to make a movie about a wildman. So I wrote my first script, called *La Marca del Hombre Lobo*. At first, no one wanted to direct it. It was something exotic and new for our time. Everyone thought those kinds of films should be directed and produced by English and American filmmakers. Spanish movies should be dramas or comedies. Writing stories about wolfmen and vampires was not exactly politically correct.

It was crazy, so to speak...

Exactly, it was a crazy thing to do. But then my script was read by a German producer, who loved it and decided to make a co-production with Spain. The German came up with the money, so we had our chance to make the film. What was interesting is that they shot it in an experimental 3D system called 'Hi Fi Stereo 70. ' They only did two more movies using it because it was too expensive. Just *La Marca* and two Hollywood films were shot using that system.

How did you get to play the lead in the film? Did you have it in mind when you wrote the movie?
No, not at all. The producers started looking for someone to play Waldemar Daninsky, because I didn't plan to become an actor. But one day, one of the German producers said: "Man, you could do it yourself!" And I said: "But I haven't starred in any movie in my life, and less with a multiple personality and all of that stuff..." In the end, we did a few tests in Madrid, in a studio that doesn't exist anymore, and the director called me and said: "Well, we'll start in a few weeks and you're gonna play the lead." The first day, Geraldine Chaplin was there and I was so nervous, but everything came out great and the movie opened in Europe and became a big hit. Then it opened in the US, and was also very successful. I couldn't believe it! That was the movie that originated the whole saga of Waldemar Daninsky.

What inspired you to create the character?
I had a lot of confused ideas about lycanthropy because of a movie I had seen featuring a wolfman. I love the idea of a good man who becomes a beast in the full moon nights. During the day he's a normal man, he can go to the bank to collect a cheque, have a child, even have breakfast in a café. He's different than the other monsters. For example, Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster or the Mummy have to live with themselves twenty four hours a day. But a wolfman doesn't have that problem. That idea gave me the feeling that I was in front of something beautiful and romantic. The character really got under my skin. That was the first movie I wrote and I didn't have the slightest idea what it was to write a script. But, having read some of them, I just went ahead with it. That's why I chose the wolfman as a main character, because of how fascinated I was with the whole double personality thing. He

can be the greatest guy by day and the meanest killer by night. Besides Lon Chaney, the most famous wolfman of all times is Waldemar Daninsky. He's the oldest of them all, because the first movie was shot in 1967 and we're in 2004, and a new movie is about to be shot. Of course, I've done it a lot of times. I've done like thirteen or fourteen movies about him and I think he is one of the most represented characters in movie history. When I wrote the first script I thought that was the only one I would ever write and I was happy enough to have done a wolfman movie, because I love them so much. On the other hand, I'm very attracted to the world of vampires, the gothic genre in general and also medieval cathedrals. All of this has contributed to the kind of films I've been doing all this time. But, you have to keep in mind that not all of the movies I've done are horror stories. Some of them don't have anything to do with the genre. For instance, one of the last I've done, *Rojo Sangre*, is just a black comedy. It has some horror elements in it, but it's more of a social satire.

You're remembered as one of the people responsible for the birth of Spanish horror cinema, nonetheless.
Well, I think I'm the one who gave birth to it, because Jesús Franco, who did some genre and horror movies, did them outside the country, not in Spain. He never did a pure horror film in Spain until a lot of time after I did. I'm the one who really started it all. What is usually called the Golden Age of Spanish horror cinema starts with *La Marca del Hombre Lobo* and ends deep into the eighties with *El Aullido del Diablo*, which is a strange mix, like one of those old Universal movies. I'm very well known all over the world, even in the US, France, Japan... I've had more success in the United States than in Spain. I've won awards all over the world: in the US, from the French Cinematheque, Sitges... I have like thirty something awards in total. I can't complain, anyway!

You've worked with a lot of directors throughout your career. Several times with Carlos Aured and Leon Klimovsky. Who did you like the most?
Well, without a doubt, my favourite director is Leon Klimovsky. He and I became very close friends, very good buddies. That led to me seeking him to direct almost every script I wrote. Leo was a very good friend for me.

Night of the Howling Beast (*La Maldición de la Bestia*) is one of Paul Naschy's outings as the doomed wolfman, Waldemar Daninsky. For reasons unclear this rather inoccuous movie was branded a "video nasty" when released in Great Britain under the title *The Werewolf and the Yeti*.

Regarding Carlos Aured, I first met him while making *El Espanto Surge de la Tumba*, which by the way is a great, fantastic film. Leon was supposed to do that one, but he wasn't available at the time. So we thought: "Who better to direct the film than his assistant?" And so he got the job. Then he went on to do some other films with Leon. We also had a great working relationship, and we had the opportunity to make three very important films for the history of Spanish Fantastic Cinema. But Leon was a closer friend of mine, more a friend than a director. I'm truly sorry that he's dead; his death meant a great loss for me. He was from Argentina, did you know?

Yes, he even did some movies here before moving to Spain…
Of course, *La Guitarra de Gardel* [starring famous tango star Carlos Gardel] is one of them.

Was it a big step for you moving on from actor to director?
Well, at one point, I thought it was the time for me to move on and become a film director. I thought I could make some good films written and directed by myself. What's also true is that I was typecast at the time, so I couldn't get any work in movies, except for the villain roles. And the world of Spanish cinema is a very complicated one to live in. So I decided to direct some movies because they didn't call me to star in any movies. I thought: "What would be better than directing a Paul Naschy film starring Paul Naschy?" The first film I did was a co-production with Italy, called *Inquisición*. I'm very proud of it. It was the first film about the Spanish Inquisition that was shot here in Spain, because until that day the subject had been taboo. And it brought us a lot of problems, because of the censorship. That's why I had to set the story up in France. By the way, the Inquisition was stronger there than in Spain. I chose a real character, a French judge, to be the main character of the story. It was a ferocious criticism of what the Church represented then. After that one, I did several more: *El Retorno del Hombre Lobo*, *La Bestia y la Espada Mágica*, and then the eighties came and that's when the Japanese called me.

How is it that the Japanese contacted you?

Well, some producers there had seen my movies, and suddenly they wanted me to go over there and make movies for them. So I flew to Tokyo and I met some very important people over there. I met some documentary filmmakers, and the first thing they asked me to do were cultural documentaries. I did some about Museo del Prado, the Palacio de Oriente de Madrid, etc. I even won an award FOR the 'Best Cultural Movie' in Tokyo, 1982. So then I started making real films, I did one Waldemar movie over there, *La Bestia y la Espada Mágica*, which at the beginning was about to be called *The Wolfman vs. the Samurais*. The co-producer was Toshiro Mifune, the Japanese actor.

In El Retorno del Hombre Lobo*, your co-star was Narciso Ibañez Menta (he's kind of the Spanish Vincent Price). What was it like working with him?*
Well, I'd been friends with his son, Narciso Ibañez Serrador, so when I had the opportunity to cast him in a part, I did. He played a doctor in that film. He was killed by one of his students, who wanted to steal his secrets to go to Transylvania.

He's a legend over here.
Well, I really enjoyed working with him. I think being by his side is great anytime. He's up there with the greatest Spanish actors of all time, like José Luis López Vázquez, Fernando Fernán Gómez and lots of others. Most of them have worked with me. It was a hell of an experience.

You worked a lot during the dictatorship of Ramon Franco. What was it like to work during those times?
There were some problems, you know what I mean? Censorship was the problem. The thing is, like a friend used to say, we had much more fun shooting movies against the censorship those days than we have today. You had to use your brain a lot back then, it's very different today. When Franco was president, the censorship was a big problem, but let's not fool ourselves; the censorship can mutate and change a lot. There's no political or religious censorship nowadays, but there's an economic censorship. In fact, that was a great time for the Spanish Fantastic Cinema. You have to keep in mind that the censors were not too bright back then. They didn't get the messages those movies were really sending. A lot of film historians around the world

have said that the best way to get to know about a country's socio-political history is through the Fantastic movies. Because there are all kinds of hidden messages in lots of those films. One could say a lot more in a fantasy film than in a reality based one. Most of the films of that time have sexual and erotic elements that in other genres would have been impossible to shoot. Anyway, most of them were cut... For example, *El Gran Amor del Conde Dracula* was cut by half an hour. It was practically destroyed. *El Jorobado de la Morgue* has been cut by fifteen minutes, so you can figure out how much damage censorship did. You had to go through the script censorship, before the movie was even made, and then again when the movie was finished. So you did double versions, one for foreign markets and one for Spain. To tell you the truth, during the Franco dictatorship, we used to do like 200 or so films a year. 220, 230 — that was a normal number. Nowadays, we're lucky if we get to thirty. Those were different times.

What do you think about the genre today?
In Spain? It practically doesn't exist. There are not many genre movies done every year. Here they make civil war type movies, comedies, whatever... Making genre movies has become a difficult task. I'm still fighting to get films done. This year, for example, I've shot two films in Hollywood and one Spanish movie that I think is one of the best I've ever done. It's called *Rojo Sangre* and it's not just a genre movie, it's a lot more than that. You see, Spanish television today is full of garbage. They show stupid shows starring the most decadent and useless people. There are no real artists. In the meantime, the real actors starve to death because they have no work. So the movie is about that. The story is centred on an actor who gets tired of those kinds of injustices. So he decides to kill all those fakers. And because he's great actor, he dresses like all the great genre movie characters: Rasputin, Jack the Ripper, etc. , and he kills them all. That's the main idea. As you can see, it's something fresh and new, and very ironic too.

I know you worked with Boris Karloff in an episode of the I Spy *tv series. What was that experience like?*
Well, I had always been a fan of his work, and I'm really proud of that work. When I met him he was very old, he died shortly after we finished that

episode. It was an honour for me to have the chance to get to know him and talk to him. He was already too old, but it was truly a great experience and I learned a lot from it. Of course, I've known a lot of great personalities… I've met people like Peter Cushing, who was quite a gentleman. I met him several times at different film festivals; we were even jurors together at a film festival. I also met Terence Fisher, who loved my work and wanted to make a movie with me. We were about to do it when he died, it was a new version of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

You did make a movie with Peter Cushing, also starring Terence Stamp.
Yes, it was called *Misterio en la Isla de los Monstruos*. It was not really a very great product. Juan Piquer (Simon, the director) — well, he is what he is. But it was great to be in the cast with those great actors nonetheless.

A movie that surprised me a lot was Los Ojos Azules de la Muñeca Rota/ House of the Psychotic Women. *It's a very different film.*
Yes, of course, and it's based on a real fact. What you see in the movie really happened. It was a very famous case in Madrid, and I based my screenplay on it. I think it has aged well. When you see it today, it's still a good film. I have a copy here at home and it really is a strange item. I think it's quite odd, yes.

I can't believe it's based on a real story.
Yes, it really happened and it was a very famous case, too. That's also the case of *El Huerto del Francés*. That movie, which I love a lot, is also based on something that really happened. 'El Francés' (the Frenchman) was a serial killer who was very famous in Spain in 1906. They discovered some horrible crimes back then. In Spain, there's a saying that goes: "Be careful, or he'll take you to the garden/huerto." And that means that something bad can happen. And it's based on the crimes of the Frenchman, because taking you to the garden meant you were about to get killed. Even today, they use that saying.

Besides Klimovsky, you also worked with some other Argentinean directors, like Hugo Fregonese and Tulio Demicheli.
I even became great friends with Tulio Demicheli. Hugo Fregonese was the first one who accepted to direct the movie I did with Tulio, but then we run

out of money. The film was called *Los Monstruos del Terror*, and Jaime Prades was the producer. Once we run out of money, Hugo Fregonese left the set and we had to hire Tulio, who finished it.

Had you seen any of the movies Fregonese did in Argentina?
No, I have seen a lot of his American movies, his Hollywood era. He directed several Gary Cooper films, and some other westerns. I had obviously seen *Pampa Salvaje*, which was the one that convinced Jaime Prades to get him to direct *Los Monstruos del Terror*.

Which of your movies do you think have not aged? Those you think one can see today and still be amazed…
Well, several. *El Retorno del Hombre Lobo, El Caminante* (which is a movie I truly love), *El Huerto del Francés, La Noche de Walpurgis, El Jorobado de la Morgue*, which I saw recently in Paris and it still looks great. I think those can be seen today as if they were brand new. I think that also depends on who directed them. Man, it's evident that times have changed… today they use the computer a lot, chroma, morphing, all of that stuff. Back then, everything was 'home-made. ' That has a lot of charm. And I think that's what's happening with my movies in the US. You only have to check on the internet to see that.

What do you think of the fact that new generations of fans are discovering your films?
I sincerely didn't expect it. Not at this level. The truth is that I travel all over the world and see what happens, and it's amazing. I'm really big in Paris and Montpelier… I realised how much people like what I do and love me. They go to watch the films at retrospectives and applaud and it's really great for me. It really means a lot. I get letters from all over the world, asking for autographs, photos, etc. So many, that I can't even answer them all. The first great impression was when I went to New York for the first time. There was a room full of people just to see me. It was just amazing. And now it's finally happening in Spain, and that really makes me happy. After all I've been through, it's great to see that it's been worth it.

Paul Naschy Filmography

2010
La herencia Valdemar

2007
La duodécima hora

2005
Crímenes ejemplares de Max Aub
Um Lobisomem na Amazônia

2004
Rojo Sangre

2003
Countess Dracula's Orgy of Blood

2002
El Lado Oscuro
Mucha Sangre
Octavia

2001
School Killer

2000
La Gran Vida
Era Outra Vez

1999
Cuando el Mundo se Acabe te Seguiré Amando

1996
Cientificament Perfectes
Comisario
Licántropo: El Asesino de la Luna Llena/Lycantropus: The Moonlight Murders
Querido Maestro (tv series)

1993
El Ángel más Caído

1992
La Noche del Ejecutor
State of Mind
Highway to Hell

1990
Hija de Fu Manchú '72

1989
Aquí Huele a Muerto... (Pues Yo No He Sido)

1988
SSS

1987
El Aullido del Diablo

1986
Mordiendo la Vida
Pez

1984
Mi Amigo el Vagabundo
Operación Mantis

1983
La Bestia y la Espada Mágica/The Beast and the Magic Sword
Latidos de Pánico/Cries of Terror
El Último Kamikaze

1982
Buenas Noches, Señor Monstruo

1981
Batalla del Porro
Monster Island/Misterio en la Isla de los Monstruos

1980
Los Cántabros
El Carnaval de las Bestias/The Beasts' Carnival
El Retorno del HombreLobo/Night of the Werewolf

1979
El Caminante

1978
Madrid al Desnudo

1977
El Francotirador
Huerto del Francés
El Transexual
Pecado Mortal/Mortal Sin

1976
Inquisición/Inquisition
Muerte de un Presidente
Secuestro
Último Deseo/The People Who Own the Dark

1975
Docteur Justice/Ambición Fallida
La Maldición de la Bestia/Night of the Howling Beast
Muerte de un Quinqui
Los Pasajeros
Todos los Gritos del Silencio
La Diosa Salvaje/Kilma Queen of the Jungle
Exorcismo/Exorcism

1974
Una Libélula para Cada Muerto/A Dragonfly for Each Corpse/Red Killer
El Mariscal del Infierno/Marshall of Hell

1973
El Asesino está entre los Trece

Los Ojos Azules de la Muñeca Rota/Blue Eyes of the Broken Doll
La Orgía de los Muertos
Las Ratas no Duermen de Noche/Crimson
El Retorno de Walpurgis/Curse of the Devil
Tarzán en las minas del rey Salomón
La Venganza de la momia/The Mummy's Revenge
El Jorobado de la Morgue/Hunchback of the Morgue
Los Crímenes de Petiot
La Rebelión de las Muertas/The Rebellion of the Dead Women
El Espanto Surge de la Tumba/Horror Rises from the Tomb
Disco Rojo

1972

El Gran Amor del Conde Drácula/Cemetery Tramps/Count Dracula's Great Love
Dr. Jekyll y el Hombre Lobo/Doctor Jekyll and the Werewolf
La Furia del Hombre Lobo/The Fury of the Wolfman

1971

Jack el Destripador de Londres/Jack the Ripper
Los Monstruos del Terror/Assignment Terror
La Noche de Walpurgis/Blood Moon
El Vértigo del Crimen

1969

Dove si Spara di Più/La Furia de Johnny Kid

1968

La Esclava del Paraíso
Las Noches del Hombre Lobo/Nights of the Werewolf
La Marca del Hombre Lobo/Hell's Creatures

1967

Plan Jack Cero Tres

1966

Operación Plus Ultra (uncredited)

1964

L'Ultimo Gladiatore (uncredited)

1963

55 Days at Peking (uncredited)

1961

King of Kings (uncredited)

MICHAEL PARE

MICHAEL PARE'S PERFORMANCE in the opening scene of Walter Hill's *Streets of Fire*, along with numerous other great cult performances throughout the eighties, made him, to a certain generation, the personification of heroic cool. Pare worked as an athlete, chef and model before turning to acting, where he struck success almost immediately, thanks to films like *Eddie and the Cruisers* and *The Philadelphia Experiment* (both of which are discussed extensively here). His broad career, which stretches through to Sofia Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides*, gives him loads to say about the industry, as well as a host of great actors and directors, including Willem Dafoe, John Carpenter, *Cult People* interviewee Billy Drago and more…

NICANOR LORETI *I'll start by asking you about your early career, like* Eddie and the Cruisers, *for instance… How did you get the part?*
MICHAEL PARE I was working in the Caribbean on a tv show called *The Greatest American Hero*. We were down there shooting a couple of episodes. We had to fly to New York to get back to California, and my agent called and asked me if I'd like to be in a movie by this guy called Martin Davidson. I went in and just talked to him a little bit and we talked about music and our love for it and stuff like that. And when I got back to California he made me an offer.

Which was starring in the movie… Were you the first choice for the part?
I assume so, yes.

Amazing. How did you get along with your co-stars?
You know, this was very early in my career, so we were all young, inspiring, dreamy kind of actors and didn't care much about the industry. So there was a really cool environment. There wasn't any jealousy or backstabbing or any of that stuff that happens when people get famous and powerful. And me and Tom Berenger got along great, because we had a lot in common, although he had made more movies than me. So that was lot of fun, because we had very similar backgrounds. His father was a printer and he's Irish-French-Canadian from Chicago and I'm Irish-French-Canadian from New York. We could be brothers [laughs].

And what about Ellen Barkin?
Well, since I didn't have any scenes with her I didn't get to know her much. Since she was around we got to hang out sometimes, but I never got to really know her.

Then you starred in Eddie Lives!*, the sequel, years later.*
Yes. Exactly. I think it was like eight years later. We shot that one in Montreal with a different director, a different writer, but the same musicians. And that was fun, you know, playing that character once again. But the thing was that in the first movie the director had hired a bunch of actors to play musicians and the second one he hired a bunch of musicians that weren't actors, except for Marino Orsini and Berney Cosin. But nobody else was a real actor.

Do you like the second movie?
Not as much as the first one. The first one was much better, it was all about rock'n'roll. The second one when I see it now, there are so many things I would have done different. Rock'n'roll is about the night and staying up until the sun comes out. But the director didn't like the music and didn't like shooting at night. He didn't have a rock'n'roll understanding.

And are you into rock'n'roll?
Yeah, but I like the old stuff. I love the music from the fifties and sixties. I love the Beach Boys and have their CD collection in the car now and I listen to it all the time when I go surfing. You know, rock'n'roll is not much simpler

than three chords and rhythm and blues. Now, a lot of the new music is nice but it doesn't move me as much as the old stuff does.

Yeah, there's too much rap and not enough rock in the US right now.
It's not that the music is that complex, it's that I don't get the melody and the rap songs are so angry. You know, music is all about celebrating and not about marching. I'm not in the army, I'm not into the revolution, I like to listen to music that can make me happy. Music is for dancing, not marching [laughs].

You got to star in another rock'n'roll movie, Streets of Fire. *How did you get that part?*
Well, my agent sent it to me. Yeah. My agent called me and told me they were going to do this movie called *Streets of Fire.* So they sent me the script and you know, it was Walter Hill and the budget was $26 million, which was a lot of money for that time, and Diane Lane was starring so I said: "Wow!" At the moment I was twenty four, so it was pretty overwhelming.

Yeah, I can only imagine, since I'm twenty four right now. What was it like working with Walter Hill?
Working with Walter was great. He just wasn't that interested in acting and exercising, he was all about the story. He said: "This isn't a complicated story. It's very simple, just like Helen of Troy. You know, a girl is kidnapped by a bunch of gouys and the hero goes and rescues her." It was a very mythological story, I think the posters said it was a rock'n'roll myth or a rock'n'roll fable. Walter is like a cowboy. He just knew it was simple story. He said: "It's not Shakespeare, you don't have to wonder what this thing means" [laughs]. It was really great to do a movie with a director like him and this enormous budget with all these fantastic actors. And Joel Silver was the producer, he's one of the giants of Hollywood, and Andy Laszlo was an Award winning cinematographer, so it was just big. Everything was big. It took two days to light the scenes in which we would shoot like half a day. And that happened when I was twenty four, so I was like "Oh, my God." I didn't know if I was in a dreamworld or a nightmare [laughs].

And did you expect to become a star when you first started?

No. When I started studying it was just like a rebelious thing I was doing in New York with my brother. He switched from engineering to English literature and I had gone to chef school to be a chef. So I quit cooking and started studying acting just because I could. I really didn't expect that to happen. I never expected to be living in Los Angeles at my age with a resumé like I have. I started studying when I was about nineteen and when I turned twenty I took a whole year off and just studied acting. And when I was twenty one, I got *The Greatest American Hero*. Then I moved to Los Angeles and just started shooting.

So it was pretty easy?
For me it was amazing. I auditioned for ABC, which was the network on which Stevie Cannell had a show, *The Greatest American Hero* and they were looking for someone to play a character who was just like me. That's where the director Marty Davidson saw me and called me to star in *Eddie and the Cruisers*.

And then you did The Philadelphia Experiment. *An amazing movie.*
It was a wonderful story, which was originally written by John Carpenter. I actually read the book on which the story was based when I was maybe thirteen years old. So it was one of those things I really love I've done. It's kind of a conspiracy thing. You know that L. Ron Hubbard was part of the actual Philadelphia Experiment?

Oh, really? Wow!
Yeah, the guy who created the Scientology.

Please tell me about that. By the way, you're not a Scientologist, are you?
No [laughs], but I read that about him. The Philadelphia Experiment was something that had to do with these two guys who had done the atomic bomb. It was at the top of all the government secrets.

I know the first screenplay was written by John Carpenter, but it was rewritten, right?

Yeah, I found that out years later when I worked with John Carpenter. The thing was, he didn't know how to end it. So he sold them the script and they put in the Nancy Allen story.

And what was she like at the time?
Oh, she was a great star. She was Brian De Palma's ex-wife. She had done a lot of big studio movies. This were the early eighties, when Hollywood was all about rock'n'roll and lots of fun.

They made better movies back then.
It was before so much computer generated special effects. they depended a lot more on the story back then. Now there are some scenes in *Matrix* where they spent $20 million and there's no actor involved. It's all computer generated.

And $20 million is almost the whole budget of Streets of Fire.
That's right.

They end up making lots of movies that are so expensive that they don't even get the money back.
Well, if you go to a casino and you go to the $100 crab table, you can lose a lot of money. If you go to the $2 table, you only lose a little bit of money.

Yeah, but I think they have forgotten that golden rule.
Well, it's a new breed of filmmakers and every couple of years there are new guys that come along. I think movies are going to go the way of theatre and there will be films that are like the big musicals on Broadway like *The Lion King* and *Beauty and the Beast* and there will also be places that run little plays like *The Iceman Cometh*. That's the thing. Today you have big movies like *Matrix* and also little movies like you see on the Independent Film Channel. All story and character driven. I think at a certain time, when you get over thirty, you start to get more cerebral and a little less shock entertained. You know, you start reading and stuff like that.

What was it like working with John Carpenter after all those years?

John was great. He was another guy who behaved like a gentleman. There was absolutely no questioning. John knew exactly what he wanted out of every shot and every line. Watching him work, you knew that John was a real artist. I enjoyed working like that. You didn't have to worry about fixing the dialogue moments before you shoot. A strong director makes an actor's job much easier.

Had you seen the original Village of the Damned*?*
Of course. Both of them are good movies. It was just a very good story.

There was a sequel to The Philadelphia Experiment.
Yes, I was going to do that but I had a personal conflict with one of the producers. We just didn't get along. I was very excited about working with the director Stephen Cornwell, because I had done a movie with him called *Killing Streets*. He was a very interesting writer/director. So it was just a producer thing. But I'm trying to get to do another picture with Cornwell right now. I think he's a brilliant guy. I regret having not done that, but when a producer says certain things, I just can't work with him.

Tell me about Killing Streets. *What was it like playing twin brothers?*
It was a lot of fun. I think that was maybe my first or my second time in Israel. Those days were much quieter. What was interesting is that you were driving down the road and you'd see some ruins and they were like two thousand years old. And they were just near the side of the road. In the United States, they would be under glass, with signs saying 'this is a great national treasure. ' But to them, what's two thousand years? I found that very interesting.

Your co-star in that film was Lorenzo Lamas. What was he like?
He was really playing a role that was supposed to antagonise me, so we weren't really hanging out and having a good time together. You know, he had his wife there and when he wasn't working he was just being a tourist. Lorenzo and I did another movie together years ago and I really enjoy working with him. He's a really experienced guy. He's been doing this for a long time, he's a second generation actor.

I know, his father, Fernando Lamas, is originally from Argentina.
Oh, really? Did he work down there?

Yes, he did some movies here and then he went to the States and married Esther Williams.
Yes, a famous swimmer. Did Lorenzo work there?

No, but his tv show, Renegade*, was pretty famous here.*
Stephen Cannell produced that also…

You did another movie in Israel, Deadly Heroes.
Yeah, I did a few movies in Israel. That one was with Jan Michael Vincent and Menahem Golan.

What was that one like? Billy Drago was in it too.
Billy, yeah. I worked a couple of times with Billy. That was a lot of fun, because it was just a straight action picture. There wasn't really much drama except for the scenes with my son. And we got to swim in a harbour and use the scuba equipment, and run around with the guns. It was a fun thing. And Jan I've been watching since I was a little kid. He just turned fifty when we shot that.

And was he OK at the time?
Oh, yeah. He was just like an old pro. I had no problems with him. He was a cool guy.

And Billy? He's quite a character. I'm a fan of his work.
Billy is a very intense guy. He has a lot of great stories. I had a great time with him. He's a real cowboy, I think he's from Oklahoma or something.

You also did Solar Force *together.*
Yes, we shot that one in Africa. That was a movie that my brother wrote. And Boaz Davidson directed it and he did a lot of rewrites on it. He kind of simplified the story. The original script was based on the Arthurian character Parsifal. You know, the guy who finds the Holy Grail and then he's

so overwhelmed he forgets to ask the question and spends the rest of his life making up for that mistake. That was the basic plot from the original script. But Boaz didn't like that so he changed it.

It ended up being like a Mad Max *movie.*
Yeah, that's how it ended up.

Do you like it anyway?
Well, you know, there's twenty seven minutes of non-stop action. Once the bad guys attack it's just like half an hour of gunshots, explosions, this and that. So it is what it is. I was hoping to sneak in something poetic, like Walter Hill does. All of his big action movies were based on Greek mythology, so we decided to base this one on the Arthurian myth.

You have a little western in there too.
Streets of Fire is basically Greek mythology.

And have you ever talked with Walter about maybe making a sequel to Streets of Fire*?*
Yeah, I did and he said he would love to do it. But it's up to the studio. Somebody would have to call him and say: "Here you have $50 million to make *Streets of Fire 2*."

It would be great. It's a true classic nowadays.
He could use all the same cast. They are all in great shape today.

Even Willem Dafoe became a big star.
I saw Willem a couple of years ago. He looks great.

I've always thought he was like this eccentric guy.
When I knew him on *Streets of Fire* he wasn't so eccentric but he had just gotten married, so he was still a young actor. But this was twenty years ago. And when I saw him I said: "Hey, Willem, I have a son now!" and he said "My kid's in college now" [laughs]. So I don't know if he's that eccentric. Actors go through lots of phases in their life.

You've done movies in lots of different genres, like sci fi, action, even dramas. Which one do you like the best?
It's hard to say. It depends on the individual story. I go to acting class, and in acting class we always study drama. You know, you can't work in an action movie without knowing how to do drama. It depends on the material.

You've done bit parts in some dramas like Hope Floats *and* The Virgin Suicides. *Why did you choose to do this kind of movies?*
Well, these are roles that a lot of people didn't get to see me in. If you do big movies that are action or sci fi and then you do a little drama, maybe you'll get considered for a big drama.

What was Sofia Coppola [who directed The Virgin Suicides*] like?*
Once again, she was focused only on the story and didn't care much about acting or camera or anything else. And the funny thing is that her mother was walking around on the set with a video camera. She said: "Hi, I'm Sofia's mother. I'm gonna be taping all this" [laughs]. It sounded like: "This is my daughter, she's making a movie. Isn't it wonderful?" It was like Sofia was on a card dealership. Like "This is my daughter, she's selling cars," you know? But it was very nice to see her directing. I mean, she's the daughter of Francis Ford Coppola, one of the greatest filmmakers of all time. And she was just this girl who was making a movie. So it was very nice to be around her.

A movie I especially like of yours is Into the Sun. *It's a very special movie.*
That one was with Anthony Michael Hall and Roger Moore's daughter, Deborah Moore. That was a lot of fun, because we went into the desert here in California and it was very well written and produced. And I got to live at home during production.

And did you get to fly?
Yeah, they took me up on a jet.

The relationship between the two main characters was very interesting...
Yeah, and there was a good chemistry between us, because Anthony Michael Hall was a very good comedian. He did a bunch of movies when he was

under eighteen, and the he did *Saturday Night Live*. He approached acting in a completely different way to me. So there was a natural contrast between our characters. We didn't have to imagine or pretend too much.

Did you have to research for that role? Do you ever do that kind of stuff?
No.

You just get into the character once you're there?
You know, the longer I do it, the less I like to rehearse with the rest of the cast. I like to work alone. I have a very simple technique of letting your imagination fly. Imagining yourself having been brought into the circumstances that the character is in and having to deal with his conflicts. It's not a big deal.

So you don't have the problem that other actors have, like taking your character home and everything?
I think that's an affliction [laughs]. That would be terrible. Imagine if you were Anthony Hopkins. You're doing *Silence of the Lambs*, and then you go home and kill your whole family [laughs].

So you didn't really become a werewolf during the making of Bad Moon*?*
Oh, no [laughs]. But I did have like four hours of sleep because it took eight hours to get the makeup on. And then we would shoot for twelve hours. So I slept in my motorhome for four hours and then I went back to work, so I felt like an animal but not a werewolf [laughs]. I felt like a trained dog [laughs].

Is working every day for that amount of time difficult?
No. Not if you're having a good time. If it's a difficult production and they tell you to go to bed too late and get up early, it could be bad, but this was not the case.

So you enjoyed Bad Moon*?*
Yeah, I had a great time with Mariel Hemingway. She's like an American royalty. She's like a Kennedy — and Eric Red was another 'general light' director. If he was happy you just knew that the picture was working.

Do you ever choose a project just because of the talent involved, or do you only do it because of the script?
Sometimes. You know, each case is unique in itself. Sometimes a director is looking for the right project and other times, you know he's gonna do a good job because of his past experience or past performances.

I want to know about Moon 44*, which was the first big movie directed by Roland Emmerich.*
It wasn't such a big movie. I think it cost a little more than a million dollars.

Really? Unbelievable. It looks much more expensive.
We shot in his father's warehouse in Stuttgart, Germany.

It looks like it cost fifteen or twenty million.
Well, that's why Hollywood figured if he could do that with one million, there was no limit to what he could do with a bigger budget.

And Dean Devlin was an actor in that one, right?
Yeah, he had a small role, a supporting role.

He went on to write and produce with Roland. Do you know what happened?
They became friends. Dean Devlin comes from a big Hollywood family, so he had a lot of contacts. He was the one that made it possible for Roland to maintain control of his own movies.

Brian Thompson was in that one, too.
He surfs up and down here at the beach.

He's a surfer too? Do you know many actors who surf?
Well, in my class there's two. Jan Michael Vincent was a great surfer. Don Stroud... and John Milius, the director, was a big surfer.

You ever surfed with him?

No, but I'm working on it [laughs]. I want him to write a television series for me. It's about... remember that show *Rockford Files*? This would be like *Rockford Files* but the detective is a surfer.

That would be the coolest show!
I want him to have a big motorhome down at the beach and to always work down at the motorhome and when the waves are big, he can't work [laughs]. We could get beautiful girls just like in *Baywatch*, laying and hanging around the beach. And then, maybe he lost his license to carry a gun, I don't know... A good friend of mine is gonna work with him in a movie he's just written.

You did this tv movie called Empire City*, which was pretty good for tv.*
Yes, Mark Rosner directed that. I liked it a lot. It was supposed to be a television pilot but the network decided to go with another show with a dog [laughs]. They said: "We don't want another detective show, we want something different." But it was a good movie nonetheless.

You were also in The Dangerous*, with Kary Tagawa.*
He's one of those eccentric guys. I think he's half Hawaiian, half Japanese. He was living in Hawaii when we made the movie. We got along very well, you know? He was really into meditation and it was all this stuff we talked about. We also were going to do another movie which never came out. He was a very intelligent and complicated guy.

Tell me about Raging Angels*, that apocalyptic movie.*
That was funny, huh [laughs]? You see, that was a movie they fired the director in the middle of it. So, for one director I was playing the villain and the other director wanted me to be the victim. But when they approached me with the script and told me that Diane Ladd and Shelley Winters were going to be in it, I thought "Wow, there's two Academy Award winners, I just wanna be around those people." And I got to sing, I got to sing my own songs. So I just said "OK, I'll do this" [laughs]. It was one of those crazy productions and you know, of all the movies I've done, there's gotta be a few turkeys [laughs].

Why did they fire the original director?
I think it was because they went into production before they had their distributor. And when the distributor found out I was the bad guy they said "Oh no! Michael Pare can't be the bad guy!" They said: "Well, the script just says so! And if it says so, he has to be the bad guy." And they said: "No, he has to be the victim." And then they fired him.

I recently saw you in a movie with Roy Scheider.
Oh, you did, huh? It's the one we shot in Russia, in Moscow. That was really cool.

It came out on video here last month…
I haven't seen it yet.

No? So I saw it before you did.
Yeah.

What was Roy Scheider like?
You know, he's been around for so long. He was a pleasure to be around. He's sush a pro. He's done so many great classics like *All that Jazz* and *Jaws* and *The French Connection*. He was one of this big stars from the sixties/seventies and had a long story in Hollywood.

Do you learn stuff from these guys when you are around them?
Yeah, when I find out there's gonna be one of the old actors in the movie, it really makes it more attractive to me. I did a movie with Rod Steiger, his last movie. And it was a terrible story but I had four scenes with Rod Steiger so yeah, I watch these guys and learn a little bit from each one of them.

Would you like to direct something someday?
Well, that's kind of why I'm trying to get back on television. If I get a tv series, after the first season they'll let me direct a couple of episodes, and then I could direct a movie. So I have a plan. I would love to direct, because it seems like a natural evolution.

Of course, it happens to a lot of actors.
It's not that I wanna do it right, it's just that I wanna do it my way. I'm not saying that anybody's done it wrong. I have my ideas.

The last question, which is your favourite movie from your filmography?
The first one, *Eddie and the Cruisers*. We were innocent then. We showed up on location, none of us got paid, we stayed for eight or ten weeks in a crappy hotel and we were just acting, we were like a theatre group. It was the innocent time of making movies. No one cared about the money, it was really a wonderful time.

Yeah, people just love that movie. The soundtrack has become a cult item.
I just saw those guys. They were doing a show up here in California and I went and had a couple of beers with them and talked about old times. You know, I would love to make a movie in Argentina someday.

Well, they are making a lot of low budget movies here today. Some of them by US producers…
Well, with the right story, you can do it. Look at Roland Emmerich.

MICHAEL PARE FILMOGRAPHY

2009
Rampage
Direct Contact
1968: Tunnel Rats — Behind the Scenes
The Perfect Sleep

2008
Far Cry
Alone in the Dark II
Road to Hell
100 Feet
Tunnel Rats
Ninja Cheerleaders
Dark World

2007
BloodRayne II: Deliverance
Postal
Polycarp
Seed

2006
South Beach (tv series)
Saurian (tv)
Furnace

2005
BloodRayne
Komodo vs. Cobra (tv)
Crash Landing

2004
Gargoyle
Cold Case (tv series)

2003
Fate
Heart of America

2002
Red Serpent
Two Faced
Blackwoods

2001
A Month of Sundays
Starhunter (tv series)

2000
Peril
Sanctimony
Space Fury

1999
Men of Means
The Virgin Suicides

1998
October 22
Back to Even
Hope Floats
Falling Fire (tv)

1997
2103: The Deadly Wake
Merchant of Death
Strip Search

1996
The Malibu Branch (tv)
Bad Moon
Coyote Run
The Colony (tv)

1995
Carver's Gate (tv)
Triplecross (tv)
Raging Angels
Village of the Damned

1994
The Dangerous
Deadly Heroes
Lunarcop
Warriors

1993
Point of Impact

1992
Blink of an Eye
Into the Sun

1991
Empire City (tv)
Killing Streets
The Last Hour
Sunset Heat

1990
The Closer
Dragonfight
Il Sole Buio
Moon 44

1989
Eddie and the Cruisers II: Eddie Lives!

1988
World Gone Wild

1987
The Women's Club
Houston Knights (tv series)
Houston Knights (tv)

1986
Instant Justice

1985
Space Rage

1984
The Philadelphia Experiment
Streets of Fire

1983
Undercover
Eddie and the Cruisers

1981
Crazy Times (tv)
The Greatest American Hero

TED RAIMI

TED IS MUCH MORE than just Sam Raimi's younger brother. Although he started in his brother's films (*Darkman*, *Evil Dead II*, *Spider-Man*, etc.) he's had an interesting career of his own, working for people like Wes Craven (in *Shocker*) and Ivan Nagy (who lots of you might remember as Heidi Fleiss' boyfriend) in the low budget gorefest *Skinner*, alongside Ricki Lake and ex-porn star Traci Lords. Ted's also appeared in *Candyman*, two Tom Clancy adaptations (*Patriot Games* and *Clear and Present Danger*), and even Bob Kurtzman's *Wishmaster*, as well as great roles in the tv shows *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *SeaQuest DSV*, produced by Steven Spielberg. But his most amazing turn was in Josh Becker's crazy little gem, *Lunatics: A Love Story* — Ted's *tour de force* performance as an agoraphobic in love is one to remember.

He's a horror fan who really loves the genre, and is happy to be a character actor and star alongside his idols. His devotion to acting and genre film makes him a landmark name in any conversation about the rebirth of horror in the eighties. I watched so many of his films growing up… In recent years, you could spot him playing Hoffman in the *Spider-Man* series and you can see him in *The Grudge*, Takashi Shimizu's 'Americanisation' of his own *Ju-On: The Grudge*, co-starring Sarah Michelle Gellar and Bill Pullman. He worked on the Sci-Fi Channel movie *The Man with the Screaming Brain*, directed by and co-starring longtime friend (and former babysitter) Bruce Campbell. But the one thing that makes him indisputably cool is that he was a guest star in an episode of one of the best tv shows of all time: *Alf*. He can also boast a unique number of cool death scenes in a lot of movies: enough said. Read and enjoy, because above all he's a really funny guy.

NICANOR LORETI *You started acting in your brother's short films, right?*
TED RAIMI That's right; I started when I was about nine years old. He started when he was fifteen, and I was about nine, and he called me whenever he needed someone to be in the background or to run around and help out. And I was lucky, because most fifteen year old kids don't want their nine year old brothers hanging around with them, but Sam was different than those. I was lucky that I got to hang out with him and fortunately the rest of his pals like Bruce Campbell, Josh Becker and Scott Spiegel. All those guys didn't mind me being around them, so I got very lucky.

*Which one of those pre-*Evil Dead *short films do you like the most? I've seen some of them, like* It's Murder *or* Within the Woods*...*
Of all of them, I think *Within the Woods* is the most complete looking movie that's got a storyline that works really well and is actually pretty scary. That one I believe was made as sort of test to see if those guys could make a horror film. It was for investors only. It was made to show to people and tell them that's what we're capable of, so they'd give us money. There were some earlier films that I thought were pretty funny, they were usually comedies with names taken from feature films.

I love the one about the lawnmower that goes berserk and chases people.
Oh, yeah! I'm in that one. It's called *Toro! Toro! Toro!* That was a gag on *Tora! Tora! Tora!*, the World War II movie. That was fun. That was all shot around Detroit and the suburbs of Detroit.

Were all of them shot in 8mm?
Yes, they were all shot in 8mm. Those were the days before video. Those were the mid seventies and I think video was already there but you had to be really rich to be able to afford anything like that. I think it was in its earlier, earlier stages, but no consumers were able to get to it.

What do you remember about making The Evil Dead*?*
Well, I was twelve back then, and I remember going to work on it later, when I was like thirteen or fourteen and traveling to Tennessee to help my brother

make his movie. I remember just going to visit him but I ended up helping him, because there were some of the actors coming and going or just leaving so I ended up being the service guy that brings them coffee and stuff like that [laughs]. And I also did stuff in the movie, like being the arms and legs of several characters. If you remember the hands grabbing Bruce Campbell's face, or being crashed in the floor, well that's me. If I remember right, I think I really hurt him.

Tell me about how your career developed beyond working with your brother?

That was a long process that really hasn't quite finished yet. Really, the first thing I did that can be considered mainstream were industrial films back in Detroit. When I was doing those I think I was nineteen, and I wasn't going to college. I was living at home and I was making industrial films; I was making a really good living because I was living at home. So I didn't have any rent to pay and I was making all this money, so I thought it was the greatest thing in the world. But the first movie I ever got outside my brother's realm was *Wes Craven's Shocker*. That was in 1989; it was shot in '88 and came out in '89. That happened pretty much as soon as I got to LA. That was a big deal for me because when I did it I was a big Wes Craven fan, so walking into his office to read for him was hard. I couldn't speak because I was so nervous. I was only like three weeks in Hollywood and already reading for Wes Craven. It was a little odd for me but I found him to be the kind of guy who really likes actors. There are some horror directors who think actors are secondary to the horror itself. Wes was not like that at all. He was very interested in the mechanics and how you had to go from this point in a scene to this other point in a scene. It was a very good experience, and I think it was Peter Berg's first movie, too. He was cool guy. I think he was like twenty seven at the time and I was like twenty three.

I like that movie.

Me too! I think that what happened was they wanted another franchise like the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series. And *Shocker* was not that kind of film. I think it's very unique and of all of Wes Craven's movies I think it's the most Wes Craven-ish alongside *Scream* or *Last House on the Left*, because

that one was more of a commentary movie and less of a horror movie. It was closer to *Scream*, because it's commenting on tv and the way we handle violence in television. It was an earlier look at that.

That's true. And Mitch Pileggi is great in it.
That's true, yeah. His career did well. I think he did *X-Files* right after that. I didn't hear him talking about *Shocker* very much after we finished it.

I want to ask you about Stryker's War (*aka* Thou Shalt Not Kill… Except) *because I love your character in that movie.*
Nicanor, I think you're one of the two or three hundred people that ever got to see that movie.

Oh, c'mon, I know at least ten people who saw it here in Argentina.
Oh, you do?

Yeah, I have friends who are fans of that film!
That's the funniest thing [laughs]! I think that's cool. That movie was shot over the course of two or three weeks. Josh Becker directed it. He went on to do some of my favourite *Xena* episodes.

And Lunatics: A Love Story.
Yeah, that's right. Well, *Stryker's War* was a lot of fun. It was an absurd idea, a great idea, and Josh did a great job with it. It was a really low, low budget film. I enjoyed doing it; it should have been a B movie in the seventies, with the war veterans and all that stuff.

It was something like 'the Vietnam vets vs. Charles Manson'.
And Charles Manson was played by my brother Sam. When I did it I think I was like fifteen years old.

Whose idea was to have your character with all those chains around him?
It was Josh's idea. He was like the 'Chain Man'. It was a very crazy thing, but funny though.

Then you also had a part in Intruder*, the first Scott Spiegel movie.*
Those days I was in the middle of doing a play in Detroit in college and I had to fly to California in the middle of doing the play to be in Scott's movie, and then I flew right back. I remember shooting late at night at the grocery store and it was my first introduction to LA. I had never been to LA before that and the first thing I saw was this kind of creepy weird part of the valley. It was two o'clock in the morning and we were in this abandoned grocery store shooting the movie, so I thought: LA is awful! This place is worse than Detroit [laughs]!

What's it like working with people you've known your whole life, like Josh, Scott or Bruce Campbell?
Well, it's great, actually... Because when you are new to any film set it usually takes about two days to see what that director wants from you. What kind of style he wants from you, is the director a funny guy or not...? It takes a couple of days until you have it figured out. And that's what's so great about working with all these people, because I've known them since I was eight or nine years old; I know exactly what they want, it's great to work together. It's a lot like band members who've been together for years. It's a great sense that if you fall, you'll get picked up right after you fell.

Did you expect your career to go somewhere when you were younger?
I always hoped I would be doing what I'm doing now. What I really enjoy is playing character parts; I think there are usually better developed because writers usually enjoy writing character parts. Also, your hours are shorter and you're the guy who gets to do everything to the main guy! You're the one! And there's nothing wrong with that. So I hope I'll still be doing what I'm doing twenty, thirty years from now. It's been a great ride, but I did hope I would be doing what I'm doing. I didn't think I'd do any tv. That came as a surprise. I thought my life was gonna be all movies and I ended up doing ten years of tv. When I got to Hollywood I did a couple of tv shows but I thought those were just anomalies. But then I did *SeaQuest*, that was three years, and then I did *Xena*, and that was like six years. Those were like nine years, but I was very happy with that.

You had cool characters on both shows.
Oh, thank you. I got lucky and it was fun. I remember sitting in that chair they put me in for three years and thinking how much I would like to be the adventurer who got to be on location running around and all that stuff, instead of me in the bridge going: "Ok, Lieutenant Ortiz, here are the coordinates" [laughs]. I always wanted to get to do what they did and I never got to, but then I got my 'you have to be careful what you wish for' because in *Xena* all I did was run around. I didn't sit down for five minutes so of course I stopped thinking it was so exciting. Running around all day every day made me think: "Oh, man. I wish I could sit down again, this is exhausting!" [laughs]. But I had a great time on *Xena*. There were some of the most fun years of my acting life so far. And it was the greatest show to be in because I got to be with actors who really liked to stretch and do absurd things. When I got in the show, I hadn't seen it before and I just came from experiences that when pretty girls are on the show it's all about the makeup and the clothes and it's about who has more lines... I'm not putting actresses down by any means but sometimes it can be a beauty contest. That can be exhausting to the other actors. But this was so much fun. Lucy Lawless and Renee O'Connor were so not that, they were into stretching the bounds of what is acceptable for a woman to do on tv. They had a taste for the absurd. That was cool.

How much of yourself did you inject into the Joxer character?
Ha ha, that's a good one! Joxer was like Ted times ten. I mean, I certainly have my moments, but normally I'm a reclusive quiet kind of a guy. That's not like Joxer at all, not very much like him. But I think I'm like him in a way that I am very clumsy. I trip over things and my mind is usually somewhere it shouldn't be. I don't like to be in a fight to prove anything, but since I'm six feet tall and 180 pounds nobody messes with me when I go out anyway.

I was very surprised when I saw you in Patriot Games.
It was a small part. Some of my parts are like that, but I don't care about that, you know? If you remember me from it, and I was OK that's the end of that. That's my job.

And you got to act with Harrison Ford.
I did get to act with Harrison Ford, that's right. He was a really cool guy. I remember him being very precise speaking and very much an actor's kind of an actor. He was a pleasure to work with. I remember sitting next to him (I was just out of school) and I remember watching him and I was thinking it was the best theatre education I've ever had in my life!

You also did the sequel, Clear and Present Danger. *Philip Noyce directed both. What was it like working with him? Because I met him and he's a very funny guy...*
He's very funny, he's very 'Oz-y' — I think he's from Australia. He was very nice. During that movie, though, he was so busy because there was so much to do, there was so much difficult stuff that I think he was kind of preoccupied. So I did not get to talk to him very much, but he was a really nice man.

When you did Evil Dead II*, it was like a 'bigger' version of the first movie. What was it like making that one?*
Yeah, the budget on that one was bigger. I believe it was like $5m but it could have been more. Still, up from a million, that's a big deal. There were more things we could do, everything was union and everything was 35mm, so it was a big thing. I think Peter Deming shot that. That movie got me my SAG card. I got my SAG card on that, because I was the only one stupid enough to agree to put that suit on. We shot that in North Carolina and we used that enormous gymnasium located in this abandoned high school, and all of the interiors were shot in there. In North Carolina the temperatures go up to ninety degrees outside and in the gym it was like eight or nine degrees more. It was like 100 degrees in the gym, and I was in this gigantic rubber suit, which added another ten to fifteen degrees. They had to bring an oxygen mask for me to breathe because otherwise I would pass out. It was unbelievably difficult but I was twenty when I did that. If I did it today I would die. I wouldn't last twenty minutes, but when you're twenty years old, you know... There are so many fans out there that love that movie.

How much time did you spend inside that suit?

Oh God, a lot! I think I was in North Carolina for three and a half weeks. I think I spent two weeks inside that costume. I got in that costume thirteen times and I think I lost about fifteen pounds. That's like a pound a day. Without exercising, that's a lot. Last week, Bruce Campbell reminded me this story about that shooting. There was a big party one night; it was at Bob Kurtzman and Greg Nicotero's house. They worked on the movie with Mark Shostrom. They invited me over to the house and I had just spent a whole day in that thing [laughs] and when I get there it's like 8: 20pm and everybody's there. I got to the party, I didn't get anything to drink, I was so exhausted and tired that the last thing I remember doing was crawling behind the couch to take a little nap, because I couldn't stand up. And the next thing I knew it was morning! During the whole party, nobody knew where I was, they thought I went home, but I was sleeping behind the couch [laughs].

You had a great scene in Candyman*, along with this girl…*
Yeah, her name was Marianna Elliott. She's been in a few things after that. She's a great actress, I had a great time working with her. That was the second time I worked with Bernard Rose. Before he did that movie he directed these sexy comedy shorts for the Playboy Channel and I was in one of them called *Motivations*. I played a very silly actor who thinks he's been driven out to the desert to do Shakespeare, but this girl I'm with doesn't understand what I'm talking about and when we get there I realise I was just brought up there to do a porno. It's very funny. It's still out there, I don't know who has it but I'd like to see it again. So Bernard asked me to be in *Candyman*. I was really embarrassed because I had to feel Marianna up. So I had to ask her before every take if she it was OK for me to do it. She had to give me permission to do it, because otherwise I would never do the scene. And then I'd do it, but I wouldn't do it otherwise.

Had you read anything by Clive Barker before you did the movie?
I did read this anthology called *Books of Blood*. They were pretty frightening. I like his short stories a lot. I like his books, too.

Irvin Kershner directed you in the SeaQuest *pilot, right?*

Yes, he did. That was really cool. He cast me, and let me tell you, I have Irvin to thank for my tv career. At first I wasn't even reading for O'Neill, I was reading for another part. But right before I left Irvin made me read for O'Neill, I did and then I got the part. It was unusual, because normally when you do tv, you have to read two or three times before you get the part. He's a great director who's been out there for so many years. I mean, there's nothing wrong with the guy that directed *The Empire Strikes Back*, the best *Star Wars* movie to date. Irvin is just great with actors. George Lucas is good at telling stories, but he's not half as good as directing actors.

You did this strange movie called Skinner. *Tell me about that experience. It's a very dark film starring Traci Lords and Ricki Lake.*
It's really creepy but it was fun to do because I really liked working with Ricki and I especially liked working with Traci. She was great, and years later I run into her in a sci fi and horror festival and we chatted about it and laughed. We shot that in LA over the course of like three weeks and what I remember most about that movie was that the director, Ivan Nagy, had a bizarre background. He did a good job. For a low budget little horror film, it's pretty good. Really grizzly, though. It offended so many people, this movie. I got so much mail you wouldn't believe [laughs]. People were saying it was such a disgusting movie! There's no point to it! Putting on a black guy's skin and then imitating him... that was the most offensive thing they've ever seen in their lives! But I loved the fact that people reacted like that, it means we did something right. Right after we finished the movie, the Heidi Fleiss scandal was exposed. And the hilarious thing was that Ivan Nagy was Heidi Fleiss' pimp. I didn't know it at the time. If you look at the movie, there are all these actresses that are pretending to be hookers... Well, when you have these kinds of girls in a movie, they are usually curious, because they want to be in the movie business too. But none of these girls were curious at all, and that was because they were really hookers! I didn't know it until the movie was over. Some people were just horrified, but I just thought it was really funny.

Traci Lords was pretty good in that film.

Yeah, totally. At that point, Traci was not in the porn business anymore. But those other girls were all into it. They weren't even in the porn business; they were plain old fashioned hookers. Most directors call for hookers after the shooting is done, but these were here before shooting started [laughs].

Is it true that you co-wrote Joxer the Mighty's song?
It is true, I co wrote it with Josh Becker. We were working on an episode called 'For Him the Bells Toll', and there was a scene where Renée O'Connor and I were chained up in this kind of dungeon place. We didn't really know what to do and Josh was crazy trying to figure something out. He said I should sing a song to her that I made up about myself that would really drive her crazy! I thought that was the funniest idea. Josh came out with the first lyrics and then I came out with the rest and he liked it. That's how that came around and then I've had to sing it in every fan convention in the history of fan conventions. They had put it in every episode after that.

Tell me about Lunatics*, which was also directed by Josh, and co-starred Bruce Campbell and Deborah Foreman.*
I had a fantastic time shooting that movie. We shot it in Detroit and I was like twenty two, I think. I didn't have a place to stay in Detroit, so I was living at home. We were shooting at night, I would sleep during the day, so I remember my dad would make me dinner and then I would go to work. It was a great experience and I was really, really lucky to be in that movie. To this day, that is my favourite movie I've been in. Not because I starred in it, but because it has such a good story, the structure is pretty good and even though I was pretty young at that time, I like what I did in it. I think I could have made a couple of different choices, but when I see it today, I still like it. I'm very happy about it. Usually movies of that era that I was in, I can't stand to look at them. But I think I'm pretty good in *Lunatics* and Josh did great work, it's one of his best.

It's really funny, too.
It had such great dialogue, the lines are amazing. I remember when we were at Sitges, Spain, at the film festival showing the movie. The theatre was packed and people started walking out one by one because they couldn't

understand what was going on. They were just residents, so most of them didn't speak English. It's like watching *Sex, Lies and Videotape* and not being able to understand the dialogue. It wouldn't make any sense at all, you wouldn't care. I thought Debbie was great in it. I remember that when we were shooting, Bruce Campbell, who was also the producer, when he was not acting, he would go into the office, sit there for another three or four hours just doing paperwork. He worked a lot during that movie. I remember feeling that we were making something really unique. Those were the last days when you could release a movie without testing it. I think it's more of a Josh Becker movie than my movie or Bruce's movie.

Who is the rap group that appears in the film?
They are one of Detroit's oldest rap bands. At that point they had been around for ten years and were called Detroit's Most Wanted, and the rap they sing was written by Josh Becker. Most of the people that auditioned for the part wouldn't do it like Josh wanted, but when these guys came in they just said they could do it. Josh listened to them and just told them they were hired. I was concerned that they hadn't acted before but they were really funny.

You also had a small part in Maniac Cop 3.
Oh God, I can't believe you pulled that one out [laughs]! I met an old girlfriend on that film. She was not an actress, she was working as William Lustig's assistant — we became good friends and then we dated for a while. It was fun, and then I did another William Lustig movie, uncredited. I was driving from LA to Florida to do another season of *SeaQuest* and this girl, Amy, invited me over to Tennessee, where she was working on this Bill Lustig movie. I stuck around for a couple of days and shot this film.

I know William did not finish Maniac Cop 3. *Do you know why?*
I have no idea. He was the director while I was there. I know he left, but don't know why. It was a good franchise though.

What's your approach to acting in a film like The Grudge*, which is a remake of an original film?*

Well, I'm not a method actor. It drives me crazy acting with method actors. I just try to figure out what needs to be done and do the best job I can. I think I'm an absurd kind of an actor. I like to make absurd choices. Takashi would laugh every time I was done with a scene. I did some funny stuff that he liked, so he kept them in. I'm probably gonna be the eight ball in the cast, because everyone else a really big actor, like Bill Pullman and Sarah Gellar. I enjoyed the hell out of making that movie.

Is the movie very different to the original?
Yes, it is different. First of all, because it's got American actors in it. Secondly, the story's been rewritten: instead of being Japanese in Japan it's now American in Japan. And there's a new addition to it that is: when you're in a foreign country, you're helpless if there's an emergency. And lots of emergencies happen and Japanese is a very difficult language. There are a lot of horror elements in that. The script intrigued me a lot. A western horror picture has a definite morality system that it's usually the boyfriend or girlfriend who dies. If you break one of these rules, you die. The people that are good are the ones that don't die; it's kind of the old boogeyman stories they told us as kids.

Like Halloween.
Exactly. Jamie Lee Curtis is the good girl and ends up living. But in Japanese horror pictures, usually it's an innocent person who releases the evil by accident. They piss on the wrong grave; they get into the wrong house… And then the innocent and the guilty get to pay the price. And it's really, really shocking when the innocent die. People like you and I, that see horror films all the time, don't see that coming. We say "What?" It's so surprising and shocking. And unconventional.

What's The Man with the Screaming Brain *about?*
I'm getting ready to go down to Bulgaria to shoot that. It stars me, Bruce Campbell and Steven Bauer [Bauer was later replaced by Stacy Keach]. I was looking forward to act with Steven since I saw him in that Kevin Reynolds movie with the tank…

The Beast*, with Jason Patric.*
Yeah, that's the one. Great war movie. *The Man with the Screaming Brain* is about a doctor who's experimenting with brain tissue and successfully puts two people's brains into just one body. It's a really cool plot. Steven plays the evil Bulgarian guy and Bruce is the good guy and I play the doctor's assistant. It's made for tv, but they do release those on video in other countries, I know that.

You also did The Attic Expeditions*, with Jeffrey Combs and Seth Green.*
Yeah, I did spend time with Seth but all my scenes were with Jeff Combs. I loved working with him, and he's a great actor. The way I got cast in that movie is interesting. Jeremy Kasdan, who wrote it and directed it, was the assistant editor on *Skinner*. He watched *Skinner* a lot and years later he called me and asked me if I wanted to be in his movie. We shot it here in LA during three weeks and it ended up being kind of a cool little movie. I think for a low budget horror movie it had a great scene, and it's when the main character wakes up in the middle of his brain operation. It was fun, I played a doctor and Jeff Combs played a doctor.

Just like in Re-Animator.
Yeah, here I'm the good guy and he's the bad guy. Just like that. Jeff is like an actor's actor. I remember asking him once why everybody liked his character in *Re-Animator* so much and he gave me a great answer. He said that it was because he didn't compromise. Everyone likes a character that doesn't compromise. Nobody can get in his way. In a good movie, bad guys are bad guys but they think they are doing good. But nobody sits behind a desk and goes "hu-huh-haha!" [laughs].

Only George Bush [laughs].
Only George Bush! That's a good one!

You also were in an episode of Alf.
I forgot the name of the episode, but I played the owner of a mortuary, and Andrea Elson, who was the pretty girl from the show, she gets stuck with me as her date for one night. It was a lot of fun.

Did you get to meet Alf?
Oh, yeah, I did. When I was doing the read through, there was a guy who was reading for the guy who did the puppet. And then when he introduced himself, he had Alf's voice [laughs]. He said, "Hi, how are you?" and I said "Oh, my God, he sounds like Alf!"

When did you decide that you wanted to be an actor?
In high school. The only good thing about high school is the fact that I discovered I wanted to be an actor. But other than that, I hated it. Did, you like high school, Nicky?

Not much. I liked the fact that I didn't have much to worry about, but hated those damn jocks... Did you and your brother go to the same school?
We did, but we missed each other by a couple of years. He's six years older than me. I went to a bunch of schools; I think my favourite school that I went to was college at the University of Detroit. That was close to the greatest theatre education I've ever had in my life. It was fantastic and they really treated me well at that school.

TED RAIMI FILMOGRAPHY

2010
Legend of the Seeker (2008-10, tv series)

2009
Angel of Death
Drag Me to Hell

2008
30 Days of Night: Dust to Dust (tv series)
Supernatural (tv series)
The Assassin Project
The Midnight Meat Train
Code Monkeys (2007-08, tv series)
Diamonds and Guns

2007
Planet Raptor (tv)
Millennium Crisis
Spider-Man 3
My Name Is Bruce
Reign Over Me

2006
Masters of Horror (episode: The Damned Thing, tv)
Kalamazoo?
Nice Guys

2005
Freezerburn
Raptor Island 2: Raptor Planet (tv)
Kalamazoo?
The Man with the Screaming Brain

2004
Illusion
Spider-Man 2
The Grudge
Tales from the Crapper

2002
Pledge of Allegiance
Fatal Kiss (tv)
Spider-Man

2001
The Attic Expeditions

2000
Growing Season

1999
For Love of the Game
Freak Talks About Sex
Iggy Vile M. D. (tv)

1998
Hercules and Xena — The Animated Movie: The Battle for Mount Olympus

1997
Wishmaster
Pathos

1996
Apollo 11: The Movie
The Shot

1995
Skinner
Stuart Saves His Family

1994
Clear and Present Danger
Floundering
In This Corner

1993
Hard Target
Maniac Cop 3: Badge of Silence
Born Yesterday
Army of Darkness
Bikini Squad
Eddie Presley
SeaQuest DSV (tv)

1992
Inside Out IV
Candyman
Patriot Games
The Finishing Touch
The Fountain Clowns

1991
Lunatics: A Love Story

1990
Postcards from the Edge (uncredited)
Darkman

1989
Shocker
Intruder
Easy Wheels

1987
Evil Dead 2: Dead by Dawn

1986
Stryker's War/Thou Shalt Not Kill... Except

1985
Crimewave/The XYZ Murders

1983
Blood Rage

1981
The Evil Dead

MICHAEL ROOKER

THIS IS ONE OF the coolest interviews I've ever done. Yes, Michael Rooker is one of my heroes. Ever since I saw him in *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer,* I've watched most of his movies and always enjoy his over-the-top charisma. I originally did this interview thanks to James Gunn, because Michael was the star of his film *SLiTHER*. It was for *Shock Cinema* magazine, but since it was *Henry*'s twentieth anniversary, and Michael did a lot of interviews, it was dropped, so I reserved it for this book and just did a little piece on *SLiTHER* for *Fangoria*. Luckily, you get to read it here in its full form and can enjoy all Michael's groovy anecdotes. Believe it or not, he started out in theatre and loves doing stage work. Mr Rooker has a lot to say about Hollywood and acting and, as you probably read before in this book, it's great to discover one of your screen heroes is as cool as you hoped. Anyway, Rooker's career is amazing, including roles in films like Oliver Stone's *JFK, Days of Thunder* with Tom Cruise, Stallone's *Cliffhanger, Henry,* George Romero's *The Dark Half,* an amazing comedic turn in Kevin Smith's *Mallrats* and so on… We laughed a lot during this interview and I'm so glad it came out so well. As James Gunn said: "Michael Rooker is the best actor in the world."

NICANOR LORETI *What was it like shooting* SLiTHER *with James Gunn and how did you get the role in the film?*

MICHAEL ROOKER In the first place, I didn't have to audition for it, since James wrote the role with me in mind. They sent me the script and asked if I was interested. So I read the script and immediately said yes.

What can we expect to see from you in SLiTHER*?*
I play a businessman in a small town who gets infected by an alien. So my evolution as a human being starts to change. I start becoming something else and it happens in four or five evolutionary stages. I evolve throughout the film and even at the end of the movie I'm not finished evolving. My character changes a lot... and starts becoming less and less human but keeps in his core some human emotions.

Did you have to go through a lot of makeup during the shooting?
The main makeup demanded five or six hours to get done. Thank goodness I only had to do that stage of makeup maybe four times. But there were other four or five stages of makeup due to the evolution of the character. I'm not in the makeup all the time during the movie. I've never done so much in my career, I'm the kind of actor who, even when I'm doing the normal person, I don't use makeup. I just like being myself [laughs]. But on this project there was no choice.

What was James like as a director compared to other people you've worked with?
I found Mr Gunn to be quite efficient. Very easy to get along with; he's a guy who does his homework and is always ready. I remember Alan Parker being a really good director and Oliver Stone, too. James Gunn was pretty much like them. And he's a really nice person. If you had a question as an actor, he was always willing to help.

I always wondered what your background was before doing Henry Portrait of a Serial Killer. *Did you do theatre or study acting?*
My main training as an actor was at Goodman Theatre School in Chicago. I did four or five years of acting, mainly in theatre and *Henry* was my first movie where my role was substantial. I was doing theatre when I got cast.

Did you get cast through regular casting or did you know John McTiernan beforehand?
I went to an audition. The director from my play was also a very talented prosthetic makeup artist. And he was in charge of the makeup of *Henry*.

So when he found out they were looking for a lead actor for the film, he told me I should audition. So I did, and got the role. That was a long, long time ago [laughs]. We're having a twentieth anniversary edition DVD coming out soon.

Did you do any kind of research to play Henry?
My research for Henry was worthless. I was reading materials written by doctors and it was not good enough. So I went back to what I was taught in my school. Basically, an actor's own instinct. I used my imagination and did it as best as I could. I didn't read much about that kind of stuff. I just used my imagination and my instincts as an artist, you know?

Henry *jumpstarted your Hollywood career, but looking back I can see that you played lots of different characters; how did you avoid getting typecast as the psychopathic killers from thereon in?*
It took the movie like five years to get released after we finished it, so during that time I had the opportunity to do other movies, other projects. By the time *Henry* came out, I had other movies, other characters and roles that I had played. And I think that helped. And also, I didn't want to play just another serial killer. I was offered a couple of other ones and I just said no. I used to just say: "No, forget it." And I went on and did other jobs. It was a good role and I didn't see any other scripts that turned me on. None of the other serial killer or psychopathic roles were as well defined.

Except for the one in Sea of Love*, right?*
Sea of Love was very good, right. I love *Sea of Love*. But in that one, my character would not admit that his ex-wife was his ex-wife. In his mind, she was a woman who still belonged to him. Even though he went to prison, they divorced, they never see each other again… So when he got out of prison, he would not leave her alone, so all of her boyfriends ended up dead. Unfortunately for her [laughs]. I liked that character, that was fun.

What was it like working with Oliver Stone on JFK*?*
I think Oliver Stone met his match when I was on set [laughs]. I can be pretty intense too, but we hit it off very well and really got along. Oliver really likes

actors. It seemed to me when I worked with him that if you were the kind of actor that was secure in what you were doing, and just did it without asking questions, without being too needy, that was his kind of actor. And that's what I did. I didn't need to find myself motivated. I could just motivate myself without help. Sometimes, when you need it, a director can give you motivation. And I can accept the ideas and motivation, etc. But I don't usually need that and Oliver Stone likes actors who don't need a lot of direction. I found him to be a very intense man, but I liked that.

You were the sidekick in two movies with two of the greatest stars in the world: Sylvester Stallone and Tom Cruise. I'm talking about Cliffhanger *and* Days of Thunder. *What was it like working with each?*
I found Tom to be very giving. He had a lot of control over the movie because he was the big name in the film. Tony Scott was a really good director. When I auditioned for *Days of Thunder* I auditioned for Tony, but I also came back and read with Tom and, I think, auditioned for Tom as well. I think Tom had a say in who was cast and who wasn't cast. As for Sylvester Stallone, he kind of knew my work already. Renny Harlin also liked my work, so basically I got offered the role. I didn't have to audition for that one. They liked my work from *Days of Thunder*, *Sea of Love* and *Mississippi Burning* — even though in *Cliffhanger* I didn't play a heavy. I think it was kind of interesting to get cast as well. So I thought: "Oh, OK, let's do it." I liked the script when I read it and I thought it was a good opportunity to play a character who was not so intense. He was forced into a situation where he had to fight for his life. He has to kill to live in that movie. Remember that scene in the mountain where I get kicked?

Yeah…
It took like fifteen hours to shoot. All in one day. And the kicking was all real kicking, stage combat kicking. Not full power, only quarter power. I remember taking off the pad from my ribs and throwing it over the mountain [laughs]. And the other actors said: "Oh, I can't do this without the pad." So the stunt coordinator said: "No, no Rooker, you gotta have the pad." I said: "No, I will not do the work with it" [laughs]. In the rehearsal of the scene, where I didn't have it, I was OK. I didn't know why, maybe it was a

psychological thing [laughs] that when you have it on you think: "Now I can hit a little harder!" But without them, you are a little bit more careful. That's what happened and I didn't get hurt. Stallone is a very intense guy too. He works very hard and we had good competition. I remember that movie being very competitive, because we're running and fighting...

How much time did it take to get in shape for a role like that?
It didn't take that much to get in shape, maybe four or five weeks. But the movie kept on being pulled back, so I had a trainer and they told me: "Rooker, keep working out". So I worked out every day for maybe two and a half months before the movie began. And once it did begin, I was glad that I had worked out even more. Because even being in shape, working high up in the mountains, in the elevation, is very difficult. When I came back home to Chicago, I could not get tired. I tried, and tried but I was so adjusted to the elevation, like 10,000 feet up... When I came back to sea level, I felt like Superman [laughs]. I was in awesome physical shape.

In 1993 you did The Dark Half *with George Romero. What was it like working with George and Timothy Hutton?*
Well, their relationship was a very intense one, almost competitive, between actor and director. I was doing a stage play in New York at the same time, so I had to go back and forth between the movie and New York. I remember it was not very appreciated by my fellow actors. George Romero, I don't think he cared, he was cool with it. But my fellow actors were a little disturbed by that. They didn't like it too much. They probably would have preferred that somebody else had been cast, [laughs]! But nobody else got cast. George Romero picked me and they had to live with it. They had to live with Rooker, whether they liked it or not [laughs]. That's the way it goes sometimes. I can see the frustration of having an actor working in another city like that, but I really enjoyed working with George. He was my hero at that time.

You kept on doing stage work while doing movies?
Oh, yeah. I did that a lot at the beginning of my career. And for the *Dark Half.*

I really enjoyed your performance in Mallrats.
That was an opportunity for me to play to my physical comedy talents. I don't usually have the opportunity to do that. In this business sometimes, although you're able to do it, you never get cast. I was very fortunate to get involved in *Mallrats*. I enjoyed it a lot. My character was great and I think Kevin [Smith] enjoyed my portrayal. The night before we started shooting he said he wanted my hair to be a little gray. So they would dye it, but then when I looked at it, it was orange! So I went home and looked at it and thought it was awful [laughs]. So I took scissors and a shaver and shaved my head. So the next day I went to work and nobody knew I had shaved my head. And I went to set with toilet paper for the cuts. You know, when you shave and you cut yourself, and you put little pieces of paper to stop the bleeding? I had cuts all over my head. It was so funny. Kevin just loved it. I did it out of frustration but it ended up great.

You had a great chemistry with Jason Lee.
Jason Lee was an awesome guy. He had never acted before. It was his first acting job, and it was a lot of fun. He and I were always talking about acting and the job. He's a really nice guy, a very natural actor.

SLITHER *does feature some comedy, too…*
It does, because of the situation. There are some elements of camp. Some of it is really shocky. It's funny in a really shocky way. I hope those elements will remain in the film.

You had a little cameo in The Trigger Effect…
My friend David Koepp asked me to come and play a role in his film. Actually his first movie was a short called *Suspicious* and it played at Sundance and stuff like that. It got very popular. And I starred in it. That was my first experience with David. And that short was his audition for *Trigger Effect*. People wanted to see if he could do a movie, so he did this short and they said: "Ok, you can direct *Trigger Effect*." Once he got the opportunity he told me: "please, come and do this role." And I read it and said OK. I did it in a way that was real.

You did The Replacement Killers. *Tell me about that experience…*
Well, Chow Yun Fat was very natural, his style was natural. He had a little language problem but I could understand him well. He worked hard to improve it. That was a very fun movie. We started it with no script. We had five different scripts and nobody could agree which one they wanted to do. Mira Sorvino had her script, Chow had his version too, one studio had their own version, the other studio had their version and Michael Rooker had no version whatsoever [laughs]! My version was: "Shut up and stay in the movie; I better keep my mouth shut." The director was under contract to do the movie and nobody would agree which script to use, so basically we worked out the script every day, and it ended up being a combination of all the different scripts. Sometimes, when you don't know what you're doing, it's best. You're free to do whatever you feel like doing that day. You're free to change what you want whenever you want. Sometimes when you have a really good script, you can't change a thing and some other times, when you don't have a script, you have different variations of what you can do.

MICHAEL ROOKER FILMOGRAPHY

2010
Blood Done Sign My Name

2009
The Marine 2
Psych (tv series)
Freeway Killer
Penance
Meteor (tv series)
Criminal Minds (tv series)
Super Capers

2008
Humanzee! (tv series)
Chuck (tv series)
Shark (tv series)
The Lena Baker Story
This Man's Life
Law & Order (tv series)
Jumper

2007
Whisper
Crossing Jordan (tv series)

2006
SLiTHER
Lenexa, 1 Mile

2005
Kinamand
Chasing Ghosts

2004
Skeleton Man
The Eliminator

2003
Saving Jessica Lynch (tv)
On Thin Ice (tv)
The Box

2002
Undisputed

2001
Replicant

2000
The 6th Day
NewsBreak
Here on Earth
Table One

1999
The Bone Collector
A Table for One

1998
Renegade Force
Shadow Builder
The Replacement Killers
Brown's Requiem

1997
Deceiver
Keys to Tulsa
Rosewood
Meet Wally Sparks
Song of Hiawatha

1996
The Trigger Effect
Bastard Out of Carolina
Back to Back (tv)

1995
Mallrats
Johnny & Clyde (tv)

1994
The Hard Truth
Suspicious

1993
Tombstone
Cliffhanger
The Dark Half

1992
Afterburn (tv)

1991
JFK

1990
Days of Thunder

1989
Music Box
Sea of Love
LA Takedown (tv)

1988
Mississippi Burning
Eight Men Out
Above the Law
Retreads

1987
RentaCop
Light of Day

1986
Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer
Crime Story (tv)

WILLIAM SANDERSON

WILLIAM SANDERSON IS THAT rare thing: a character actor who's managed to stay in control of their career. He has been in an impressive number of classics, worked with some of the best directors in the world, made independent films, westerns and A-list movies, and still keeps on appearing in big productions nowadays. You might think all of this would make him one of those cocky Hollywood guys, but William is actually really humble and gentle. Some might remember him for his great performance as J. F. Sebastian in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, co-starring with Harrison Ford and Rutger Hauer, but he's been in lots of other interesting films too. William has illuminated the screen in pictures like *Last Man Standing* (Walter Hill's often underrated neo-western starring Bruce Willis and Christopher Walken), the John Carpenter scripted *Black Moon Rising* (co-starring Tommy Lee Jones and Linda Hamilton), John Frankenheimer's tv movie *Andersonville* and the grizzly seventies cult classic *Fight for Your Life*. I think I'm right to say he's had an amazing career… so far. With stuff like *Deadwood*, I guess it can only get better.

NICANOR LORETI *You're working on the tv show* Deadwood.
WILLIAM SANDERSON It's good to have a regular job. I'm on my day off today.

Do you get many days off?
Well, it's erratic. Sometimes I work a lot of time without days off and then I get too many.

What's it like working on the show with people like Keith Carradine and Brad Dourif, whom you've worked with before?
Yes, on independent film. It's great. I'm a fan of most of those actors — you just mentioned two of them. It's a great cast full of wonderful actors, some of them from the stage. I'm glad to be involved. People talk about the language, but I tell them I don't have enough character to turn down the money. I really like the writing and I think I've never worked with a better writer than David Milch. I really enjoy working with David; I'd say that this has been one of my most rewarding experiences in many years. I don't know how long it will last, but every day is a gift. If I was twenty five years old or thirty, I would take it for granted. I don't take it for granted anymore.

Hey, I'm twenty five and I don't take it for granted.
Well, you're wiser than I [laughs], because a lot of young actors think they're going to start at the top and stay there. There's a lot of vicissitude and you're going to get a lot of rejection, so you should enjoy the moment while it lasts.

The first episode was directed by Walter Hill. You worked with him before. Does it make it easier in this case?
I hope he trusts me a bit more. He was there when I first auditioned. It's a tough question; you can't always tell what Walter's thinking. I heard him say he usually tries to pick the right actors for each project, and if he doesn't like what you're doing, he'll let you know. That's important. He's been out there for a long time, even wrote big classics like *The Getaway* and directed *The Long Riders*. I just took it as a compliment that he hired me.

Do you research for the part of a man who lived more than a century ago?
I love to research for *Deadwood* when I can, but there's not much time. I did some insight on my character during the first year, when his integrity was questioned and I wanted to seek into his darker side. Research makes it feel more like it was a real-life character. You don't know how someone feels when he kills somebody, but sometimes they don't feel bad at all. I mean, Charles Manson doesn't feel like, excuse my language, an asshole. But I guess most of the townspeople don't think I'm tough enough and I'm playing the buffoon.

The other movie you shot with Walter Hill, Last Man Standing*, was also kind of a film noir western.*
Yeah, it was. We shot it in the same lot, the same studio. It's always fun to be rehired by the same person. It's a compliment.

What was it like shooting that one? The cast was great. Christopher Walken, Bruce Willis, Bruce Dern…
Well, working with Bruce Willis is quite an experience. When you watch him work you think there's got to be a reason he's one of the highest paid actors in the world. So I tried to learn and also have some fun. Although the film didn't make as much money, I got my share of the money [laughs]!

You have some cool scenes together, like when you explain to him people think you're crazy, and then he takes his guns and tells you he's gonna kill 'em all.
Thanks, you're very kind. I can tell you it's pretty tough to remake a classic like *Yojimbo*. I'm a journeyman actor and part of my journey is getting to work with those actors I admire and make good films. So hopefully I get to learn and I get to travel. You have to remember that I'm a journeyman.

Do you improvise much during shooting or you stick to the script?
Yeah, sometimes. If you come up with an idea that's good enough for the director, they'll let you do it. There's not too much improvising with Bruce Willis, though. He'll do the improvising. But usually, if you have a good idea and they're open to it, yeah, it does happen from time to time. Some people do improvise better than others. I happen to not like a lot of it, especially when I do it [laughs]! There's a little bit of truth in every joke.

Could you recall one of your improvisations for us?
Oh, I don't know, man. I forget a lot of stuff like that. Not on that movie, though. I remember not understanding a direction. But sometimes that's for the better and something good comes out anyway. If you know Bruce and you've worked with him and he trusts you, it's easier to venture a little out of the script. But it's been nine years since that film… I do recall they paid me a lot of money and I took a cross-country trip with my wife, visited the family,

had some dinner. One time during the shooting I was driving in South Texas about 4 am and got lost. I got to the border with Mexico and the border patrol stopped me, pulled me over and asked me why I was going there. "What? Where am I?" I said. But luckily the guy had seen *The Newhart Show* on tv, so he told me it was 4 am and I was on the wrong side of South Texas, near the border. Thank God he had seen *The Newhart Show*!

Does it make it easier being recognised — when you go to auditions?
I guess it works both ways. Some people don't want you in their films because you might get recognised from a tv show. And some people will pay extra money because you were in *Blade Runner* and they were fans. I don't know the answer or what goes on in their minds. I like the fact that people recognise who I am and want me to work for them and sometimes they ignore me and I can tell more about them that way. The people that get recognised every minute pay a price for it. I'm very happy because a lot of people know who I am and I'm happy with my present vision.

Tell me about Blade Runner.
The casting director had seen me in a CBS tv movie of the week and when *Blade Runner* came along he brought me in and I met Ridley Scott. He was the one that turned things around, because I had played bad guys all along. And after that film I showed everyone I could play sympathetic characters as well. So maybe Ridley Scott's inside joke let me start a new career. It was a stroke of genius. My whole experience with Ridley Scott was a joy. He may be a problem for other people but never for me. He whispered in my ear stuff about my character and those are fun things to hear. It wasn't a big part but the film became a cult classic.

You had great scenes in that film with Rutger Hauer and Daryl Hannah.
They were great. I don't see them anymore and I wish I could. It was fun, you know? We were younger, a lot younger.

Everyone seems to remember the good old days of the eighties [laughs].
It changes, but you manage to stay in the business. I'm in the good old days, as far as I'm concerned.

What's the main difference between independent movies and big movies in terms of rehearsal?
It's different, depending on the director. I've been in big movies where they did weeks and weeks of rehearsals before shooting even started. Most of the movies I've done, they rehearse a little bit before they shoot and then they shoot it. That's kind of the way I like to do it. But sometimes it helps the cameraman to rehearse again and again, so you have to do it. When they made *Batman Forever*, I wanted to do a bit part just to work with Tommy Lee Jones again, but at the time I was set to do a tv movie called *Andersonville*, and the director, John Frankenheimer, said: "Absolutely not! You have to come to Georgia and rehearse!" So when I got there, he knew I had missed the other job and looked at me and said: "When it rains, it pours" [laughs]. I don't like a lot of rehearsal, to be honest. If you're doing a play, you should rehearse a lot. I'm thinking of Picasso. He said when he was a younger painter, he calculated every movement and then he became older and he just painted. I don't know if you can apply it to acting but you get the idea.

Which part was it in the Batman *movie?*
It was a small part playing a bank guard when Tommy Lee came in blazing. At that point, everybody wanted to be in the movie. Bono, lots of people. Today, I'm happy it happened that way. I got to work with John Frankenheimer again, so it was OK: I practise a little self deception and I tell myself: "Things are great and are going to be."

How many times did you work for Frankenheimer?
Twice. He tried to bring me in a third time for that movie *Reindeer Games*, which he did for Miramax. But then someone else got the part. Miramax wanted somebody with a name and I wanted to work with Gary Sinise. I love to travel and work with people I like but also like to stay in town.

You worked with Tommy Lee Jones in Black Moon Rising*, right?*
Yeah, I survived it [laughs].

Did you two get along?

If we got along? I worked very hard to get along. I like Tommy, I know he's difficult with some people but he paid me a big compliment after fifteen years or so. He asked me to be in a play that he directed. That was great. He could have asked anybody. He's fun to work with when he's directing. Some people find him difficult, but we did some stuff together, and then we did the play and then I ended up getting a job on *The Client*. It was OK; I worked in my own town, got to stay with my children and my wife and got to work with Susan Sarandon. You make the work the best you can. It's a lot like playing golf. If you don't come in second, you come in third but you make a lot of money. You say to yourself: 'Well, I didn't come in first, but I made a good deal of money and I got a winning attitude!'

You seem to be taking it one step at a time.
Well, I have a wonderful life and I work with people I like. The problem is you're afraid it's going to end all the time. "What will I do after the show?" I consider myself a lucky guy. It took me a long time to get that kind of maturity. I'm trying to get better priorities. I didn't always have the right ones for many years. How does one not take himself too seriously, or life itself? There's a lot of BS in Hollywood. And I love the idea of an actor becoming successful, the thing is: it's hard to stay on top before falling.

What about Fight for Your Life*? It's a cult classic nowadays.*
I think I was trying to break into movies on the East Coast. I went down there, it was midtown Manhattan and these guys seemed reluctant to give me the part. Finally I got it. It was similar to this Humphrey Bogart movie, *Desperate Hours*, and I got decent reviews around the country for it. Because of that film I got to be in bigger movies. Even Tarantino saw the film. I was glad to hear that. I've always wanted to work with Tarantino.

Well, everybody does.
One day we were driving up the hill, in the centre of town and I saw him. So I put the window down and I asked him: "Can I be in your next film?" and he looked at me like "Who's this wacko?" [laughs]. So we drive all up the hill, to the top of Mulholland, and he puts the window down and he said: "William Sanderson, you were great in *Fight for Your Life*." The guy had seen the film;

my wife couldn't believe he saw it. But that made me feel good. The movie is out on DVD right now and they asked me to do a commentary for it and I said: "No, thank you." I also did another one which you probably never saw, co-starring Faye Dunaway. I can say I'm not proud about it, but… I've taken most roles that were offered to me, just to keep learning.

Did you ever turn down a role?
Not many. When I did it was a great feeling, but I have to make a living. Sometimes I take films just for the moment, to make a living. Last year, I was asked to do another job, but I was not able because of the schedule.

I don't want to sound like a wiseass, but why did you ask that question? I know you're the one doing the interview [laughs].

Oh, because you've done so many movies and you said you didn't turn many roles down.
This is my final answer to that: not enough. "Have you turned down many films, William?" "Not enough." There's a need in me to keep on working and expressing myself. I'm very proud of my career and I even remember that when *Blade Runner* came out, they said it wasn't a good movie, and today it's considered a classic, so you never know.

Yeah, I read reviews from that era and they weren't good.
You know what? I'm impressed that you've researched so much for this interview. Am I talking too much? I always do. I've shared planes with Tommy Lee, I travelled with him, went to his ranch and he's always been the nicest guy. But he can be mean to the press. I'm just myself, probably boring.

Never boring! With all the movies you've done, c'mon!
We're different kinds. It's like the people who don't like Picasso. Did you know that story? A woman told a man she didn't like Picasso. The man told Picasso, "That woman doesn't like you," and Picasso said, "Which one?" [laughs]. That's just like Tommy Lee Jones. He's hard to talk to. I have my own memories of him, my philosophy is different, but we think the same about the job. It's like the military, 'Just get the job done'. You have to love and respect your fellow actors. You have time to be selfish, on the stage, or

whatever, but when it's over, just love your neighbor. What else can I say? It's just tough up here, tough people. I'm just proud that I make a living.

You also did Lone Wolf McQuade*, with Chuck Norris and David Carradine. What where they like?*
Great, great fun. That was the first time I worked with Chuck. I guess he liked me because I jumped down a third floor window. If you ask other actors why they like you usually it's because you're willing to take chances. Sometimes they like living on the edge and I do too. Now I'm much more careful, but Chuck Norris has so much character, he inspired you. And his brother Aaron is a wild man, too! He wanted me to work with him again in another movie, but I wasn't able to do it so they gave it to Emmet Walsh.

Oh, that's Missing in Action.
Yes, I had been doing a lot of independent work that year and wasn't able to do it. But I got to work with him two or three times and I can't say enough good things about him. He's controversial, sometimes you get to make the same movie all over again. And one time they like you and the next one they don't. I love martial arts, I just adore the discipline, not many people know about that. Chuck made a lot of movies and it's not always about the money.

Lone Wolf *is a cool movie, though…*
Oh, yes. It still pops up now and then. We shot it in El Paso, a beautiful town. Chuck is a great guy; sometimes people don't see the good side of him. I only saw the love in him.

Billy Drago told me the same thing about Chuck.
Billy, I like him. That's a sweet man, and he plays those mean characters. Can you believe that? He's really sweet, has a good soul, a good heart.

You worked together several times.
Yes. You know what? They say that in order to survive in Hollywood, you have to change loyalties. You have to be friends for little time, but Billy's something else. I consider him a friend. We don't hang out, I mean, I'm busy; he's busy with his projects.

You also worked with Clint Eastwood and Burt Reynolds in City Heat.
That's the reason I couldn't do Chuck's *Missing in Action*. Because I had to listen to the agent and I took this one, which turned out to be a lot of fun. I would have liked to do the Chuck film, because my brother was in Vietnam twice when I was eight years old. But you have to understand that the chance to work with Burt Reynolds and Clint Eastwood on the same film is appealing to a semi young person. Both of them were totally fun and I learned later that Burt was working under a lot of pain in that film. I made some mistakes but luckily they paid me and I didn't get fired. You wanna hear about one?

Oh, please, yes.
I was there with a friend doing this none-role that I had and I got really pissed off and said real loud; "God damn!" and Burt Reynolds was doing his part and turned around and asked: "What the hell was that all about?" But he never lost his temper, didn't say a word or hold it against me or anything. My actor friend was Nicholas Worth. We've known each other for years, we both recommended each other for projects and I love him. He was big enough not to hold it against me either. You don't have to be yelling when Clint Eastwood and Burt Reynolds are working.

Tell me about working with Charles Bronson and Lee Marvin [in Death Hunt*] together.*
Thank you for letting me talk about that. They were heroes of mine growing up and I wasn't let down when I worked with them. Unfortunately, the director Peter Hunt was going to amputate my arm onscreen. They ran out of time, but it was fun being around Lee Marvin and Charles Bronson. When I did the movie, I didn't even have a car and my son was about to be born, so I got a vacation and got out of the movie. I have to tell you though, they earned their legendary status. I got a signed picture by them. They inspire you.

I have to ask you about Newhart. *Did you enjoy working on the show?*
It was the easiest show in Hollywood. It made you feel like you were doing a play. I played a character in New York, in a Czechoslovakian play. He was a tramp. I got five or six characters in independent films where I played the town crazy. Then I got that show. The two brothers had an amazing theatre

background, and I just got lucky. We all do during our careers. I can tell you it was great to have a regular job, especially one that means you can go home after you're finished.

You had a catchphrase on that series, right?
Yeah, I said: "I'm Daryl, this is my brother Larry and this is my other brother Daryl."

Did the writer come up with that one?
Yes, of course. She had written it for another actor, and I never even met her. They were going to hire another guy, and for a year or two, they didn't tell me. They even did a casting with him, but they didn't hire him because he was too crazy. It was great doing that show and it got me a lot of recognition for a while, but it can be a curse and a blessing at the same time, like I told you before.

What do you think of your own career so far?
After years of auditions and disappointments and living in Hollywood it's hard to trust. I used to drink too much, which I don't do anymore, thank God. Once you fall in love, you to have to be grateful and avoid wasting time. And I'm not so grateful sometimes. I should be because I'm really lucky to make a living out of this.

WILLIAM SANDERSON FILMOGRAPHY

2010
True Blood (2008-10, tv series)

2009
Trauma (tv series)
Lost (tv series)
Imps* (segment: Alienski)

2008
Pretty Ugly People

2007
Life (tv series)

2006
Deadwood"(2004-06, tv series)
Beyond the Wall of Sleep
Disappearances
The Treasure of Painted Forest

2005
The Painted Forest

2004
Avatar
Promised Land

Deadwood (tv)
Beyond the Wall of Sleep
Wit's End

2003

The Low Budget Time Machine
Gods and Generals
Monte Walsh (tv)

2002

Never Get Outta the Boat
Monkey Love

2001

Crossfire Trail (tv)
Dying On the Edge

2000

Stanley's Gig
Miracle on the Mountain: The Kincaid Family Story (tv)
Stageghost

1999

Nice Guys Sleep Alone

1998

Sorrow's Child
Babylon 5: Thirdspace (tv)
George Wallace (tv)

1997

Critics and Other Freaks

1996

Forest Warrior
Last Man Standing
Andersonville (tv)

1995

Hologram Man
Phoenix

1994

Wagons East
The Client
Mirror, Mirror 2: Raven Dance
Siringo (tv)

1993

Man's Best Friend
Return to Lonesome Dove (tv)
Skeeter

1991

The Bob Newhart Show 19th Anniversary Special (tv)
The Rocketeer
Sometimes They Come Back (tv)
The Giant of Thunder Mountain

1990

Mirror, Mirror

1989

Lonesome Dove (tv)
Deadly Weapon
Last Man Standing
The Man Who Broke 1,000 Chains (tv)

1987

Dead Aim

1986

Dalton: Code of Vengeance II (tv)
Black Moon Rising
The Defiant Ones (tv)

1985

Streets of Justice (tv)
Fletch

1984

City Heat

1983

Women of San Quentin (tv)
Nightmares
Lone Wolf McQuade
China Lake
Who Will Love My Children? (tv)

1982

Newhart (tv)
The Executioner's Song (tv, uncredited)
The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez (tv)

1981

Blade Runner
Death Hunt
Raggedy Man

1980

Scared Straight! Another Story (tv)
Seed of Innocence
Coal Miner's Daughter

1979

The Onion Field
Savage Weekend

1977

Fight for Your Life
Ningen no Shômei/Proof of the Man
The Other Side of Victory (tv)

DON STROUD

DON STROUD IS ONE of Hollywood's last rebels. He started out working and surfing in Hawaii, before going on to Hollywood. When I contacted him (for one of the first interviews I ever did), I didn't have enough money to pay for the international call… This guy was *so* cool that he had someone read him the questions while he recorded the answers. A few weeks later I got a tape in the mail and it was Don Stroud's voice answering my questions! That voice sounded even darker than it did in the movies, I couldn't believe it.

Don has lived quite a life. He's a real survivor who's done a Bond film, the original *Amityville Horror* and even co-starred with Clint Eastwood several times; a wonderful career indeed. Even if he's semi-retired nowadays, movies like *Angel Unchained* keep on surprising new generations. Stroud's so versatile that he can even play a crazy bad guy like Marcelo Santos in Alex de la Iglesia's *Perdita Durango* and outplay J. E. Freeman's impressive performance of the same role in David Lynch's *Wild at Heart*. Don has a cool screen presence that enables him to stand shoulder to shoulder with Clint Eastwood without looking like just another punk. He's not just another bad guy… he's The Man. He even did *Two to Tango* here in my beloved country (ha!), Argentina. That film was one of many produced by Roger Corman during the eighties and, dare I say it, the best of the bunch by far: it was the casting of Don Stroud that made it work.

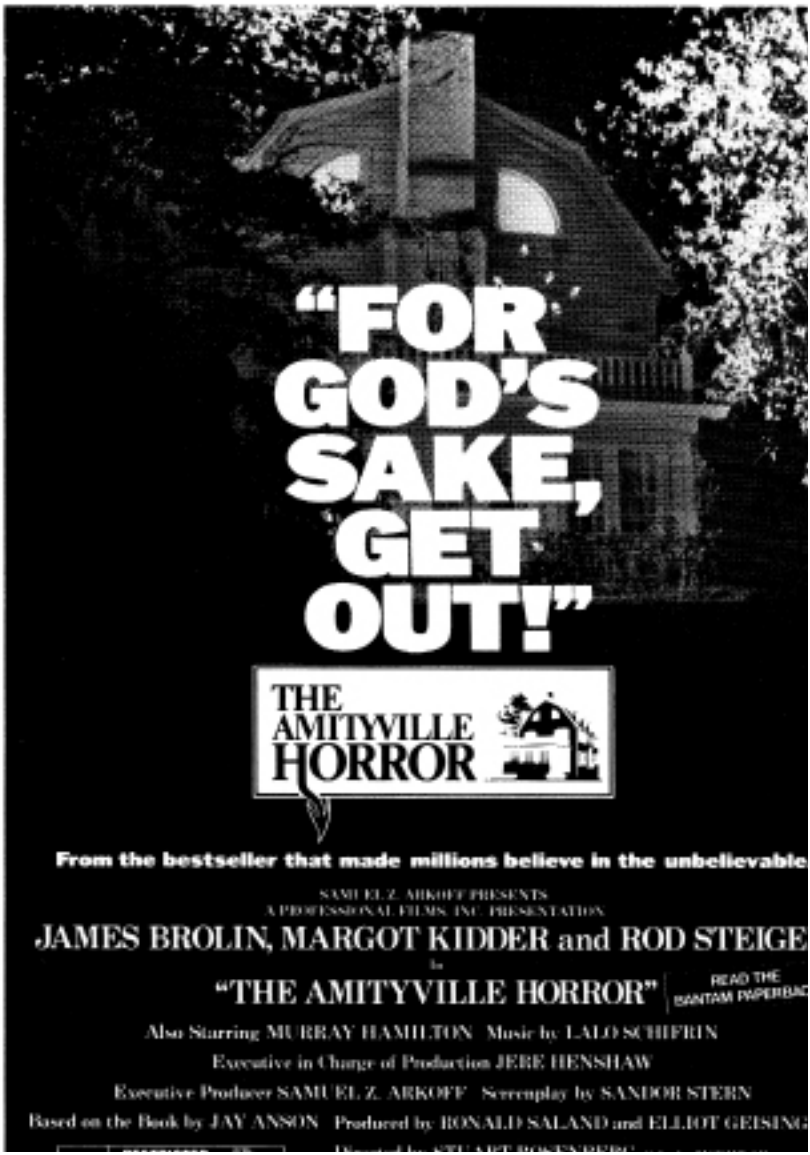
NICANOR LORETI *I know your career started in the tv series* Hawaii 5-0. *How did you get that part?*

DON STROUD Well, *Hawaii 5-0* was a great place to start, because I grew up on a beach in Waikiki, which gave me the great opportunity to do that show. But where I really started was in *Hawaiian Eye*, with Troy Donahue, Bob Conrad and Connie Stevens. That old television show was the first colour television show of that era. And Troy Donahue was the star. He was making $3,000 a week at that time. He was the top dog there. I was sitting there on the beach and they were filming *Hawaiian Eye*. And I saw he couldn't surf. He could surf a little, but not very well. By the way, he was a dear friend of mine and, God rest his soul, he just passed away. My dear wife and I spent a lot of time with him before he passed, along with his lovely gal Whoopy. Anyway, I got a job doubling and doing the stunts. At that time, I was fourth in the world surfing. We had very long hair those days, way before long hair was in style. We were surfers in Hawaii, long before jet planes — with Panamerican, it used to take twelve hours to fly over there to Hawaii. I grew up in the beach, and it was one of the wonderful times in my life, but that's a whole other story. I'll tell you about it some other time... Anyway, I started in *Hawaiian Eye*, with Troy Donahue, and those were wonderful days. I grew up with Paul Strauss, another great surfer and we really had quite a great crew and a lot of fun. Quite a few years later I came to Hollywood, of course, after doing *Hawaiian Eye* and tried to get into showbusiness. Many years passed since and then being called back to Hawaii, to do *Hawaii 5-0* from Jack Lord, because he liked my work. He was a fan of mine, and we became dear friends, we became very good friends, Jack and I. As a matter of fact, a lot of actors didn't really like Jack that much, but Jack and I got along fine. There's a lot of great stories there. And I could go on telling you stories... But doing *Hawaii 5-0*. . . the first one I got was this hitman that came from Chicago and came to the islands to murder this girl. And then he falls in love with this girl, and had to murder another girl, and dump the body in the river. I get all kinds of parts like this. So, I fell in love with a girl, and the Mafia made me shoot this girl. It was a great part. The next one I did I could use the local accent, and a lot of that stuff. The third one I did was the best role. He was a sniper, at night, who got to shoot cops from this car. Those were wonderful, wonderful days. But *Hawaii 5-0* was great, and Jack

Lord was real good to me. And it was real fun being there and staying at the Hilton when I was a kid. To be a beach boy in Hawaii is like being a sultan. Those guys were kings back in those days.

What do you remember about your time in Argentina shooting Two to Tango *and your work with Hector Olivera?*
First of all, Hector Olivera was one of the greatest, nicest, best directors I've ever met. He was just a wonderful man. We were doing a low budget film called *Two to Tango*, and Roger Corman was producing. He's done a lot of films down there (including *Cocaine Wars* and *Play Murder for Me*). It was a great situation, but Hector Olivera was wonderful, and Argentina... You know, when I went from Hawaii to Los Angeles, and then went to New York, I thought: "Wow, New York is really different from Hawaii, and Los Angeles is really different from New York." And then you go to Argentina, and think you're going to some kind of third world country. Oh, Argentina was, from all the countries I've been throughout the world, one of the greatest, and I've been to almost every country there is... I fell in love with Argentina so much. The people, the men and the women, they were just wonderful, wonderful people. And the food... I never had steak like that in my life! All the wonderful co-stars I had in the movie, and all the extras. We all had mate [a local beverage] in the afternoon. I played a lot of tennis down there, I was in great shape. And I still think the movie is great, and Hector is really a special guy and I wish him the very, very best of luck. I remember *The Night of the Pencils (La Noche de los Lápices)*, which he directed, was excellent. It was a great experience, I can't say enough about how much I enjoyed being in Argentina and staying there.

You played Marcelo Santos in Perdita Durango. *Did you enjoy working with Alex de la Iglesia?*
God, that's another great director! You know, I'm very fortunate for an actor. A character actor gets those monster parts, but I get to act with the best directors in the world. And Mexico City, oh I love Mexico City. We had a wonderful time there. The director, the producers, everybody in that situation... And they are all from Spain. The actors were wonderful in that film.


"FOR GOD'S SAKE, GET OUT!"
THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
From the bestseller that made millions believe in the unbelievable
SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF PRESENTS
A PROFESSIONAL FILMS, INC. PRESENTATION
JAMES BROLIN, MARGOT KIDDER and ROD STEIGE
in
"THE AMITYVILLE HORROR"
READ THE BANTAM PAPERBAC
Also Starring MURRAY HAMILTON Music by LALO SCHIFRIN
Executive in Charge of Production JERE HENSHAW
Executive Producer SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF Screenplay by SANDOR STERN
Based on the Book by JAY ANSON Produced by RONALD SALAND and ELLIOT GEISIN

"There is already considerable public interest in psychic phenomenon and the supernatural. Every effort should be made on the local level to seek out those colleges and universities as well as reputable organizations which have courses or activities dealing with the various areas of parapsychology and psychic phenomenon." *The Amityville Horror* pressbook.

How did Alex contact you? Had you read the Barry Gifford book or seen David Lynch's Wild at Heart*, in which J. E. Freeman plays Santos?*
Yeah, it was a *Killer Inside Me* type of film. But with Alex it was like this: he was looking for someone to play that part and he was running out of time, and they were in Los Angeles looking for an actor and I got the call and I went there, and of course my eye was bad, and had this look above me... I auditioned and got this weird, weird terrific part. Alex told me: "You are lucky, because I said: 'The first guy that crosses the door and can play it straight will get the part. '" And you never get the part that easily. They see a lot of people, and when they've seen the first hundred people, then they get serious about someone. Then, towards the end, when they haven't found anybody, someone yells: "There's our guy!"

Tell me about The Divine Enforcer. *It's a cult movie today with a cast of genre favourites that includes Jean Michael Vincent and Erik Estrada...*
Oh God, I never thought someone would ask me this question! These are great questions. That was a great, great little film. Poor Jan Michael Vincent. Let me say a little about Jan Michael Vincent. I remember when we were just kids together in the Universal lot. He was the most handsome looking kid I had ever met in my life. I say little kid but he was my age, but he had this look like he was a kid. He had this little baby face and I was playing the bad guys and he was always playing the good guy... He's a wonderful friend and I love him dearly. But the film itself was incredible. It was a low budget film, it was a non-union film, I even had trouble with the union over that film. It's the last time I ever worked non-union, because I'm on a pension now, and I won't mess with my pension [laughs]. So they came and offered me a thousand bucks a day to be in the movie. And being in a low budget film where they paid you cash under the table. It's as good as ten thousand a day, or as two in my business. And my business is cheap! [laughs] What a great, great part that was. I do a lot of autograph tours all over the country, and a lot of times people ask me stuff from that picture and I haven't paid much attention to that film. But I'm glad I did it. It was back on those low budget days, when I was doing a lot of B movies.

I think one of the real standouts in your career is Bloody Mama. *What was Roger Corman like as a director? You must have enjoyed starring with Shelley Winters, De Niro, Bruce Dern and Pat Hingle…*
Corman is a fine director. He was great directing *Bloody Mama*. He was also producer in a lot of other films. But Roger is just magical. I've known him for thirty something years now, and he helped me a few times when I was really down. He got me a lot of jobs. God bless Roger Corman! He's done a lot of little great low budget films, with real good actors. He pays them a few bucks but keeps 'em working and it's wonderful. And he always comes through for you. He came through for a lot of actors. I know a lot of actors who can say this. He just kept me in the business. Roger is always kind of there, because of these little B movies that take a lot of money and are on *Showtime* and all these little shows and they're great. But *Bloody Mama* was awesome. It had a great cast and crew. Shelley and I had quite an affair in those days. I don't know how good Shelley is right now. And speaking about Roger, he produced *Two to Tango*, the one done in Argentina. And Hector was in town looking for a guy to play a hitman looking to retire, and Roger got me the part.

And The Amityville Horror*? I think it's the best in the series. The sequels suck! Did you see any of them?*
First of all, there's only one true *Amityville Horror*, and it's the one with Jimmy Brolin, Margot Kidder, myself and Rod Steiger. The sequels were100% junk. They were just trying to redo the original. But the real *Amityville* was a great thing. It was a small part, but I got to work with Rod Steiger, and we shot over in Long Island, New Jersey. We were in Connecticut; it was great, a great shoot. We shot with all of these co-stars, and Rod Steiger was great. He taught me a lot about taking my time a little more. That sometimes in your life you should think it over for a second before you speak. Even if you know the answer. When you are acting, you have to learn to lie. Even to lie with your eyes. There must be a lie in your eyes. He taught me a lot of stuff about that. And Stuart Rosenberg, that was another good director. I didn't think it was the scariest movie in the world, to say the truth.

Did you enjoy working on License to Kill*? I know your favourite James Bond films are the ones with Sean Connery.*

Doing that film was cool. I spent twenty weeks in Acapulco and Mexico City doing a James Bond film. Good money and twenty weeks of work... What more would an actor want than to be in a James Bond movie? Then they called me and said that they had changed their mind, and I wouldn't be able to play the original part. So then they offered me this smaller part. I got the part of Howard. Same twenty weeks, same money, same deal. The other part was Felix Leiter, the guy that got married at the beginning of the movie, that got knocked off and eaten by the shark. But Howard turned out to be a great, great part. Twenty weeks in Acapulco, say no more! I had the time of my life! I worked every day for a few hours; they picked you up with a limo, Robert Davi, Timothy Dalton, John Glen... another great director. I really have worked with some excellent directors.

Doing James Bond, it's fun to do the movie, but it's more fun to travel the way they do. You'll never travel like this. You fly in real jets, and fly to these islands, those exotic places, and there are a lot of exotic people around too. Let me tell ya. The stuntmen were brilliant. They were all English stuntmen. These guys have so much balls... I mean, they hang from helicopters and drop into the water, drag from the back of planes. These guys are incredible. I love all those guys, wonderful stuntmen. So I did some good films, and I loved James Bond, thank you for asking.

DON STROUD FILMOGRAPHY

2009
Sutures

1999
L. A. Heat (tv series)

1998
Men In White (tv)
Detonator

1997
Haunted Sea
Little Bigfoot
Perdita Durango/Dance with the Devil
Wild America

1996
Precious Find

1995
Criminal Hearts
Dillinger and Capone
Soldier Boyz
Sawbones (tv)
The Alien Within (tv)
Carnosaur 2

1993
Cyber Seeker
The Flesh Merchant
It's Showtime
Return of the Roller Blade Seven

1992
The Legend of the Rollerblade 7

1991
The Divine Enforcer
The Roller Blade Seven
Prime Target

1990
Cartel
Down the Drain
Mob Boss
Twisted Justice
The King of the Kickboxers

1989
Dragnet (tv series)
Licence to Kill
Mike Hammer: Murder Takes All (tv)
Hyper Space

1988
Two to Tango

1986
Armed and Dangerous
The Return of Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer (tv)

1985
Gidget's Summer Reunion (tv)

1984
Mike Hammer (tv series)

1983
More Than Murder (tv)
I Want to Live (tv)
Murder Me, Murder You (tv)

1981
Sweet 16
The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia

1979
Express to Terror (tv)
The Amityville Horror
Mrs. Columbo (tv series)
Supertrain (tv series)
Search and Destroy

1978
Katie: Portrait of a Centerfold (tv)
The Buddy Holly Story

1977
The Choirboys

1976
Hollywood Man
The Killer Inside Me
Death Weekend
High Risk (tv)

1975
Murph the Surf
Sudden Death
Cop on the Beat (tv)

1974
The Elevator

1973
Scalawag
Slaughter's Big Rip-Off

1972
Rolling Man (tv)
The Daughters of Joshua Cabe
Joe Kidd
Deadly Dream (tv)
The Red Baron/Von Richthofen and Brown
D. A. : Conspiracy to Kill (tv)

1970
Angel Unchained
Bloody Mama

1969
Explosion

1968
Something for a Lonely Man (tv)
Coogan's Bluff
Split Second to an Epitaph (tv)
Journey to Shiloh
What's So Bad About Feeling Good?
Madigan
A Hatful of Rain (tv)

1967
Banning
Games
The Ballad of Josie

DARIO ARGENTO

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT to think of a more significant director than Dario Argento. Outside of Hollywood anyway, where he achieved the impossible: bringing a national genre to an international audience. Argento popularised the Italian 'giallo' genre around the world, and thereby even influenced the future direction of Hollywood horror (John Carpenter has often admitted to Argento's influence on films like *Halloween*). His reputation is based upon outstanding classics like *Deep Red* and *Suspiria*: disturbing, original and popular movies that made his name a legend. But Argento's career has embraced many more styles besides: he's worked with George Romero (on *Dawn of the Dead*), made a mainstream Hollywood picture (*Trauma*), been distributed by Troma (*The Stendhal Syndrome*) and directed numerous other ambitious experiments (which even included a version of *Phantom of the Opera*) to varying degrees of commercial and critical success. It was great to get the opportunity to ask Argento a few questions about acting, theme music, cinematography and, of course, *Suspiria*…

NICANOR LORETI *What was it like working on your* Masters of Horror *episode for television,* Jenifer*?*

DARIO ARGENTO It was a great experience, working with some friends I've known since forever and having enormous creative freedom as well. It's been a very interesting experience. We've been shooting in Vancouver and the postproduction is being done in Los Angeles. It's a new version of a comic book story from the seventies called *Jenifer*.

Whose idea was it to adapt Jenifer*? Yours?*
They offered me several script ideas for me to choose. One of them was this comic book by Bernie Wrightston, *Jenifer*.

Could you choose the actors you wanted?
Yes, they are all American actors. It's been a successful production and it's a very strong and shocking film because of the nature of the story.

Is it very different from your latest movies, like The Card Player *and* Sleepless*?*
Yes, very different. It's a really strange story, which has a lot of elements from the classic seventies films. That's the era the comic book is set in. There are some fantastic elements in it but it's also pretty realistic.

What are you working on nowadays?
Right now, I'm working on the third part of the *Three Mothers* trilogy. It's the last part of the trilogy and I'm writing it right this instant. It's about the Third Mother, Mother Lacrimarum, the "mother of tears."

What can we expect to see in this one?
It will be a very shocking film. The final part of the trilogy will start with a bang!

Will it be shot in English?
Yes, because it will be a co-production between USA and Europe.

Will it have music by Goblin, once again?
I don't know yet. First I have to finish the script, then shoot the movie, and then I'll tell you [laughs].

You recently finished Do You Like Hitchcock?*...*
Yes, it's a co-production between Italy and Spain. It features two Spanish actors and it's an homage to Hitchcock. The story is based on and is a revisitation of several Hitchcock movies. It's the story of a young man who's

studying cinema and gets mixed in a series of strange events which remind him of Hitchcock movies.

Is it true that you used to play the main theme of the film for the actors while you were shooting Suspiria*?*
I did it sometimes. Because the music is directly linked to the atmosphere of the movie. It was written before we started shooting, and we had discussed it with the musicians a lot. So it helped a lot to have the music play for the actors, because they have their own rythm and that way, they can help get it better through the music.

Why did you decide to get Jessica Harper for the role of Suzy Banyon?
I had seen her in the movie *Phantom of the Paradise*, directed by Brian De Palma. I loved her face and her performance. It was truly perfect, for me. So I flew to Los Angeles and we talked, and she loved the idea for the movie. So she came to Europe, Germany, Italy, where we shot it. It was a wonderful experience.

What's your working relationship with actors? Because I know you don't use the same actors in films twice… except for your daughter Asia.
It's true. That's because different stories need different actors. As for Asia, she did the films in different stages of her life, so she wasn't even the same person every time.

What's your relationship like with cinematographers? It's pretty clear that Luciano Tovoli had a great influence in the way Suspiria *looks.*
I think it's very important to have a good relationship between a director and a cinematographer. It's very important to have a good dialogue because they have to agree with certain things. They are working on the same project and have to talk and have some ideas in common about how the film should look: ideas about the lighting, ideas about colours and how they should look. They have to study the project together in order to get a plan

You worked with Mario Bava on Inferno. *What was his role?*

"REMEMBER 'PSYCHO'?
There are scenes with that kind of impact! Worth seeing!"
If you think you are being followed home from this movie, keep telling yourself that it's all in your mind.
A Jack-the-Ripper type story... with a twist!
SHOCK! GOOSEBUMP TENSION!
SIDNEY GLAZIER PRESENTS
The Bird With The Crystal Plumage
Spine-tingling suspense that made Hitchcock a household word!
A SUSPENS THRILLER

"COLD AND CALCULATING! A phantom figure wearing black leathe stalks pretty girls....a sound track composed of heavy passionate breathi ...*It is only a question of how bloody the killing will be!*"
—NEW YORK DAILY N

He was responsible for the visual effects. He was in charge of their development and it was a beautiful experience working with him on that project. I obvioulsy knew him beforehand because my assistant was his son, Lamberto. We really got along and he really loved the way I was working on the movie.

Which directors influenced you the most to become a film director?
Oh, before working as a director I was a film critic. So I've been involved with movies for a long, long time. I couldn't say exactly which directors influenced my life the most. There are lots of them. The world of movies is so enormous. There are lots of directors from many different countries.

Before you became notorious as a film director yourself, you co-wrote Sergio Leone's Once Upon a Time in the West. *What was that experience like?*
It was a great experience. It was something very important because I wrote it with Leone himself and Bernardo Bertolucci. The three of us worked on the screenplay together. It was very interesting and it's something I'll never forget. The story by Leone was groundbreaking because it was the first time a woman was the main character.

Now that you mention it, in several of your own movies, there are strong female leads or heroines: Suspiria*,* Creepers*,* Trauma*,* Stendhal Syndrome*,* The Card Player*...*
I think it's just a coincidence, because I've done so many movies [laughs]! I think it's because of the interest I have in women as a whole.

What was it like working with Jennifer Connelly in Creepers*?*
She was very young, only thirteen years old. It was a great collaboration, I met her in New York, because she had a part in Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America*. Sergio told me to meet her, because he thought she was a very interesting actress. So when I was about to shoot *Creepers* I flew to New York and talked to her, to her mother and family, and she accepted. She was truly beautiful and a great actress, too.

Is it very different working with American and European teams?
No, not at all, because movies are movies, you know [laughs]? The cameras, the actors, the screenplay... all of that is what really makes a movie. With the technology we have these days there's almost no difference. The only difference is the language you speak [laughs].

DARIO ARGENTO FILMOGRAPHY

as director, unless stated

2009
Giallo

2007
The Mother of Tears (also writer, producer)

2006
Masters of Horror (episode: Pelts, tv)

2005
Do You Like Hitchcock? (also writer)
Masters of Horror (episode: Jenifer, tv)

2004
The Card Player/Il cartaio (also writer, producer)

2001
Sleepless/Non ho sonno (also writer, producer)

1998
The Phantom of the Opera/Il fantasma dell'opera (also writer)

1996
The Stendhal Syndrome/La sindrome di Stendhal (also writer, producer)

1993
Trauma (also writer, producer)

1990
Two Evil Eyes (segment: The Black Cat, also writer, executive producer)

1987
Opera/Terror at the Opera (also writer, producer)

1985
Phenomena/Creepers (also writer, producer)

1982
Tenebrae (also writer)

1980
Inferno (also writer)

1977
Suspiria (also writer)

1975
Deep Red/Profondo rosso (also writer)

1973
The Five Days/Le cinque giornate (also writer)
Door into Darkness (episodes: Testimone oculare, Il tram, tv, also writer, producer)

1971
The Cat o' Nine Tails/Il gatto a nove code (also Writer)
Four Flies on Grey Velvet/4 mosche di velluto grigio (also writer)

1970
The Bird with the Crystal Plumage/L'uccello dalle piume di cristallo (also writer)

ENZO G. CASTELLARI

ENZO G. CASTELLARI… FIRST OF ALL I should let you know that the G in that name is very important. He almost killed me when I got this interview published in Argentina, and didn't include the G on the cover of the magazine. It turned out that it came from his original surname: his real name is Enzo Girolami, and he was the son of famous Italian director Marino Girolami, which some of you might remember from movies like *Cannibal Apocalypse* (yes, the one starring John Saxon). I grew up watching Castellari movies like *The Bronx Warriors* and *Thunder*… At a time when we were all expecting a cool sequel to *Escape from New York*, Enzo came up with the closest thing. He even included cool American actors like Vic Morrow. Years went by and it turns out he was also responsible for impressive westerns like *Keoma*. A true classic, *Keoma* stars Franco Nero in one of his best performances and shouldn't be missed at any cost. Castellari has directed movies in almost every genre imaginable and, unlike most Italian genre directors, he always came up with fun films. Even if it's not one of his best, a Castellari movie is always fun to watch.

NICANOR LORETI *How did you start working in the film business?*
ENZO G. CASTELLARI I was basically born in the movie business. I spent all my childhood period visiting my father's set. Then I started my first working experiences an extra, little roles… assistant director… editor… My father was my best teacher.

The Bronx *films are truly cool. What was it like working with Vic Morrow, Henry Silva and Fred Williamson? Are they different from Italian movie stars?*
I have wonderful memories of Vic Morrow. Extraordinary man. A truly professional person. He was my best friend. Henry Silva is a very nice man. A positive person to work with. Fred Williamson knows everything about the movie business and it was very easy to work with him. A real vacation! You have only mentioned these three actors, but I have worked with many known American actors. There is a big difference between Italian and American actors. The American actors come 'to work' — they respect the calls, the movie director's decisions... instead, our Italian actors have a more 'star' attitude, except for Franco Nero. He is a real actor!

How did you get Mark Gregory to play Trash [in 1990: The Bronx Warriors*]?*
I met Mark [Marco De Gregorio] in my gym. He was seventeen years old then. He was always on the side and trained in silence. Marco had a wonderful athletic body. He was perfect for my Trash!

You've directed films based in a lot of different genres: westerns, sci fi, straight action, etc. Which genre do you prefer?
For a movie director like myself, I love to describe a story in a cinematographic way. First of all I have to be in love with the story, whatever the genre is... but it also has to include action sequences. Of course! The genre I prefer the most is the western. It is the genre that gave me the chance to direct my first movies. I will always have a special feeling towards the western genre.

High Crime *includes a lot of amazing high speed chases that remind me of the style of John Frankenheimer. Did you have him in mind at the time or is it just a coincidence?*
I adore Frankenheimer. He probably has influenced my way of doing cinema.

Franco Nero and Fernando Rey were in that one. What was it like working with them?

High Crime was our first movie. It was the first time I worked with Franco. Our friendship and esteem started immediately. We respected each other's work and we collaborated with great pleasure. We both love the magic world of cinema. Fernando was a stupendous actor. Had a wonderful, classic style, a very elegant person and a great friend. A true professional.

What do you remember about the making of Scaramouche *and working with Ursula Andress?*
I do not have good memories about the filming of *Scaramouche.* For many reasons, which I prefer not to mention. Working with Ursula was just fantastic. She was the light that brought beauty to the film. No rivals. She was a wonderful woman, a nice person, a serious and professional actress.

Day of the Cobra *tells the story of corrupt bureau officers. Do you research to tell real life stories like this one?*
Tito Capri (the screenwriter I always worked with) and I do a lot of research together before we start to write a script. Our common friend, Nicola Longo (a professional police officer of the Italian Drug Enforcement) has always suggested and helped us to start and build our stories.

Franco Nero stars in that one; he had the reputation of a true professional. What was he really like?
Franco is an extraordinary professional actor. He falls in love with the story. From the first to the last frame. He is the most fantastic collaborator. We love to work together. He deeply loves the world of cinema. He is my best friend.

You worked with Bud Spencer and Philip Michael Thomas on the Extralarge *tv series. Is it difficult making comedic action films? How did Bud and Philip get along?*
If I like the script, whether it is comic or dramatic, I do not have any difficulties to film it. It is always a real pleasure to develop a film following my style. Working with Bud and Thomas was really fantastic! It was always a joy, while not forgetting the professional atmosphere. We worked one intensive year together. I also had other international stars involved in

the filming of the six movies. Dionne Warwick, Christopher Atkins, Lou Ferrigno, Erik Estrada, Steven Andrews. Not to forget the German actors. Wonderful experience! Unique. I also had a great and fantastic American and Italian crew.

You worked on several movies with Fabrizio De Angelis. Could you describe your working relationship?
I do believe the three movies I filmed produced by Fabrizio are the perfect example of collaboration and respect there is between a producer and a movie director. He did give the wonderful chance to work using a lot of different variety of technical equipment. A dream for a movie director!

Sinbad of the Seven Seas *featured lots of special effects. How hard is it having to deal with effects like that?*
You have touched a delicate point. The film was interrupted when I had to start filming the visual special effects. The production company [Cannon] went bankrupt when I ended the shooting. The film was not complete. Cannon did not give me the chance to finish. Then many years pass by and I do see the film has been released on VHS. I manage to get a copy... I was very surprised to see that I even 'produced' the movie. Which is absolutely not true. I never watched the movie entirely. I only saw the first ten minutes. I could not believe my eyes! A real horror! The most disgusting movie I ever directed. Then I found out that Cozzi was called to direct the new 'mother and daughter' scenes instead of the visual special effects, which were essential for the movie. Result: *disastrous*!

Were you influenced by the Sinbad films of Ray Harryhausen?
I prefer not to continue with this topic. I hope you can understand. Thank you.

Of all of your movies, which one do you like the most? And which one don't you like at all?
The one I do not like is *Sinbad* and the one I love the most is *Keoma*!

You've made several tv movies and miniseries. What's the main difference between shooting for the big screen and the small screen?
There are no big differences with *Extralarge*. I did not film six tv episodes, but I filmed six different movies. The production companies and the tv channels involved in the tv miniseries today give little time and a very small amount of money. This is the major difference.

What do you think about the state of Italian cinema today?
Today the Italian cinema is in a deep coma. We do all hope for a miracle: to see the Italian cinema successful and strong.

What was it like working with James Franciscus in Great White*? What was he like as an actor?*
He was a great professional. He knew all he had to know about shooting a movie and could follow my commands and the camera movements without any problems. I remember that he proposed a change in the screenplay and came up with some dialogue for Vic Morrow, which was very good. Vic was very happy about this and also very grateful. James was truly a great actor.

Was it difficult shooting on the sea? Any complications?
Shooting on the sea is always very difficult because you're always depending on the weather, on the wind, on the waves, things you cannot possibly dominate. We shot at the Mar Tirreno, in Italy, in Toscana and in Campania. Also in Georgia and Savannah in the US. Also in Malta, where we had the opportunity of using a big pool that had been built specifically for the film industry. Here we could master the waves and the wind as we pleased. In the middle we built the mechanical shark, which was used via remote control by the technicians.

There were rumors that Universal sued the producers due to similarities with Jaws. *Is any of this true? What happened?*
Yes, it's all true. My movie opened only in Los Angeles and it grossed $2,200,000 in the first weekend. It was an extraordinary success, but it scared the people at Universal, who were preparing *Jaws 3-D*. So they tried to do a lot of things to shut down my movie, they came up with all kinds of

excuses. They said there were a lot of similarities between my movie and the original *Jaws*... The blond girl, as in the first *Jaws*, it was a white shark, like in *Jaws 1* and 2, etc. So they used their lawyers to stop my movie being screened. In three weeks it had grossed like $16 million. And then, *Jaws 3* came out, and it turns out they had copied several scenes from *my* movie! The windsurfing scene, for example. In the end, the Americans had copied me!

Enzo G. Castellari Filmography

as director, unless noted

2009
Caribbean Basterds

2001
Gli Angeli dell'Isola Verde (tv series)

2000
Gioco a Incastro (tv)

1997
Deserto di Fuoco (tv series)

1996
The Return of Sandokan (tv series)

1993
Jonathan Degli Orsi (also writer)

1991
Extralarge: Black and White (tv)
Extralarge: Black Magic (tv)
Extralarge: Cannonball (tv)
Extralarge: JoJo (tv, also writer)
Extralarge: Magic Power (tv)
Extralarge: Miami Killer (tv)

1990
Extralarge: Moving Target (tv, also writer)

1989
Sinbad of the Seven Seas (also writer, producer)

1987
Hammerhead (also writer)
Striker
Il Segreto del Sahara (tv series, second unit director)

1985
Operation Nam (actor only)
Colpi di Luce (also writer)

1984
Tuareg=Il Guerriero del Deserto (also writer)

1983
Escape from the Bronx (also writer)
The Winds of War (tv series, actor)

1982
1990: The Bronx Warriors (also writer, actor)
Warriors of the Wasteland (also writer)

1981
Great White

1980
Il Giorno del Cobra

1979
The House by the Edge of the Lake (also actor)
The Humanoid (second unit director)
Il Cacciatore di Squali (also actor)

1977
Inglorious Bastards (also actor)
The Dope Way

1976
Cipolla Colt
Il Grande Racket (also actor)
Django Rides Again (also writer)

1975
The Loves and Times of Scaramouche (also writer
Hector the Mighty (also writer)

1974
The Citizen Rebels
La Polizia Incrimina la Legge Assolve (also actor, writer)

1972
Father Jackleg (also writer)

1971
Gli Occhi Freddi della Paura (also writer)

1969
Eagles Over London (also writer)

1968
Go Kill Everybody and Come Back Alone (also writer)
Renegade Riders (also writer and producer)
Johnny Hamlet (also writer)
God Was in the West, Too, at One Time (actor)
I Tre che Cconvolsero il West-Vado, Vedo e Sparo

1967
Any Gun Can Play (also writer)

1966
Drango: A Bullet for You (asst director)
He Who Shoots First (asst director)
Missione Speciale Lady Chaplin (asst director)
Veneri in Collegio (editor)
$100,000 for Ringo (asst director)

1965
Veneri al Eole (editor)

1964
Badmen of the West (editor)
Las Otoñales (asst director)
La Donna Degli Altri è Sempre Più Bella (asst director)

1963
Le Motorizzate (asst director, editor)
Queste Pazze Pazze Donne (editor)

1962
Dieci Italiani per un Tedesco (asst director)

1961
Beauty On the Beach (second asst director)
Ferragosto in Bikini (second asst director)
Le Magnifiche Sette (second asst director)
Scandali al Mare (second asst director)
Walter e i Suoi Cugini (second asst director)
Caccia al Marito (second asst director)

WES CRAVEN

By Nicanor Loreti and Axel Kuschevatzky

WES CRAVEN IS ONE OF THE MOST influential filmmakers of his generation. He helped build two of the most successful franchises in horror movie history: the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series and the *Scream* saga. His career goes back to seventies shockers like *Last House on the Left* and *The Hills Have Eyes* and he's also done tv work and mainstream films like *Vampire in Brooklyn* (starring Eddie Murphy). Even if he had his clashes with the mainstream of Hollywood (like his recent re-shooting of *Cursed*, which got mixed reviews) Craven has always managed to stay on top in the horror community.

He gave early roles to people like Sharon Stone (*Deadly Blessing*) and Johnny Depp (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*) and helped build careers of B movie legends like Michael Berryman (the scary bald guy from *The Hills Have Eyes*). Hell, if you're reading this book you already know who Wes is. His worst stuff is enjoyable anyway (I've seen *Invitation to Hell* several times — call me sick in the head, but it was a childhood favourite). While working on postproduction for *Red Eye*, Mr Craven agreed to this little interview. I did this interview for the tenth anniversary issue of *La Cosa* magazine, so it's the first time anyone will be reading it in English. Craven's answers are interesting and clever, and it's cool to read his thoughts on Hollywood, religion, 'sequelism' and the fate of a project named *Marimba*...

NICANOR LORETI & AXEL KUSCHEVATZKY *You are finishing postproduction on* Red Eye. *What's it about? How do you feel about the movie?*

WES CRAVEN *Red Eye* is my first psychological thriller, so it's very special to me. It's a bit more adult, depicts a reality that's not quite as fantastical as that of horror movies, and is extremely performance-driven. That sort of thing is what directors live and die for, so I'm very excited about the film.

Along with other filmmakers with a strict religious background, such as Paul Schrader and Neil La Bute, you seem to be concerned with the concept of the breakdown of the family. Do you see any connection between these two things?

I don't feel there's any particular connection between having been raised in a strict religious background and my fascination with themes of families and of families falling apart. I do think the religious background accounts for themes of good vs. evil, and of the deterioration of this rigid 'either black or white' modality of valuation of people, into a more chaotic 'hard to tell the bad guys from the good guys' feeling as the movie moves through the second part of the Second Act and heads for the Third Act climaxes.

The concern about the breakup of the family comes from a more personal place. My father left our family when I was a child, and died shortly after, so the feeling of what was once whole and protective suddenly being gone was and is a powerful one for me. Later I myself went through a divorce or two — and the idea of the 'American Dream' marriage as being a 50/50 crap shoot was always disturbing me.

You have made sequels to your own movies and now you are producing a remake of The Hills Have Eyes. *Do you enjoy revisiting your previous films? What do you think of the remake mania? Why did you decide to get involved in the new* The Hills*?*

Well, more than involved, I'm a co-owner, along with the original producer, Peter Locke. I only share ownership in my first two films; *The Hills have Eyes* and *The Last House on the Left*. The rest are all owned by studios. This remake of *Hills* is exciting to me (and Peter) because of the director and producer (and co-writers). I saw their film *High Tension* and thought it

was terrific. The interesting thing is that the two met when they were just teenagers, by one inviting the other over to his house to watch this really scary film. That film was the original *Hills Have Eyes*.

As for the remake mania, I'm all for horror films being made, and for attention being called to the original films as well, for a young audience that might not even have seen the originals.

How about when you do commentaries on DVD and have to see a movie again? Is it a painful process where you want to change every frame, or do you enjoy everything?

In general I enjoy the process. I usually do it with my producer, and if possible with the editor I've collaborated with for over a decade, Patrick Lussier.

You didn't go to the movies until college, when you discovered a lot of European filmmakers. Since then you have written a lot about dreams and dream imagery. How big an influence was Luis Buñuel [another director fascinated by dreams]?

My original fascination with dreams began when I was a child. There was a period when I suffered from nightmares, and became acutely aware that the land of dreams was the one place that I had to go alone. Later, in college, I had a minor in psychology, and began logging my dreams. I got deep into the process and was amazed by the scope of dreams, once they can be recalled. So by the time I got to the films of Buñuel (and Fellini as well), I was primed and ready to be turned on to their cinematic possibilities. And both of these masters of course fired up my own imagination.

In the book Filmmaking on the Fringe*, Maitland McDonagh categorised you as a 'prisoner' of the horror genre. Do you feel trapped?*

That's a tough question. I certainly have felt this many times, but I've also enjoyed the hell out of making scary movies. What I would love is to be able to move freely between genre and non-genre films. I've done it once, with *Music of the Heart*, and I am making plans for other non-genre films in the near future. We'll see if it proves to be possible or not. Right now I'm just grateful I've been able to make films for so long and keep getting work!

Your first professional job as a filmmaker was in 1971 editing Sean Cunningham's Together. *It was one of those 'white-coaters' of the period, where a 'doctor' explains the rules of sex. How did you get involved in this project?*

I originally came into the film at the very bottom of the ladder, as someone hired to sync up dailies from an addition shoot Sean and his partner at the time had just shot. But since Sean and his partner were working without the help of anyone else, I got to stick around, moving up from syncing dailies to running errands to writing, trying directing a scene, and even cutting — doing all of these things for the first time. Over that year, Sean and I became friends. We were the same age, and had kids the same age, and had a lot of fun together. So when *Together* was finished and went on to be successful, its backers offered Sean money to do another film for them. This time they wanted something scary, so Sean told me that if I wrote a scary script and they liked it, I could direct it. It's how things worked back then — very informal, people going on gut instinct. I didn't know anything about writing scary material, but I took a shot at it, and the money guys liked what I wrote. So that's how my first film, *Last House on the Left* came to be.

What was the most difficult thing to adjust in your life when you decided to jump from college professor to filmmaker?

Just about everything, I think. I went from having money in the bank, a good job, a wife and two kids, two cars and two motorcycles when I was teaching, to having nothing but bills, a failed marriage, and sleeping on people's couches on the Lower East Side. I drove a cab to make ends meet and support my kids. It was much easier back then to assume that my wish to direct would come to nothing, rather than becoming a household name. It still seems weird.

With movies like New Nightmare *and the* Scream *series you reflect on the genre and its boundaries. Do you want to try making a self-referential movie again?*

Something vaguely biographical might be fun, but cinematically self-referential, no. Been there, done that.

After New Nightmare*, how does Wes Craven, the director, rate Wes Craven, the actor?*
Wes Craven the actor shouldn't quit his day job.

What can you tell us about Cut & Run *[aka* Amazonia*], which ended up being directed by Ruggero Deodato? Michael Berryman was in it, was he your casting idea?*
Wow, haven't heard that referred to in a while. *Cut and Run*, or *Amazonia*, originally was called *Marimba*. *Marimba* the script came from an assignment I got from a Roman (really) Italian producer named Allesandro Fracassi. He loved American films, liked mine in particular, and was interested in making a film about the drug trade between Colombia and the United States. I researched it and wrote several drafts, and we actually prepared to shoot the film. We took three or four scouting trips to Bogotá and several coastal cities in Colombia, under the protection of several powerful friends Allesandro had in Colombia. It was an incredibly interesting trip, that's for sure. But, three weeks before shooting, the Italian government, which was a fifty per cent investor, collapsed. And so did half of our budget. Allesandro was never able to raise that money again, so I went back to the US and that's how things stayed for quite a while. Later I heard rumours that he had gone out and made a film based on the script, on an even smaller budget than we had, and that he'd kept Berryman as part of it.

Two interesting things about the film that never got made: it was to be shot by Jan De Bont (later *Speed* and *Twister* fame) and line produced by Steve Miner, who later worked with Sean on several of the *Friday the 13ths*.

You've done several tv movies. Which one is your favourite and why?
My favourite tv work by far was on the *Twilight Zones* that were made in the mid eighties.

We really like Night Visions. *What do you think of that one? Why didn't it work out?*
You never know for sure why something doesn't get picked up by a network.

In the seventies a lot of Italian directors made rip-offs of Last House on the Left. *Which was the best? And the worst?*
I never saw any. I think David Hess did one or two, but I've never had a copy of any, and I didn't particularly want one.

Films like The Hills Have Eyes *and Tobe Hooper's* The Texas Chain Saw Massacre *came out in the same decade. What was it with you people and that 'don't get out of the city' feeling during the seventies?*
It's really not so much that (although most of us were city boys when we made our films). The idea of going from the city into the countryside is an ancient paradigm, really. It's going into the woods, away from the veneer of civilisation, going away from the law of books and courts and into the laws of the jungle, survival of the fittest, into the world of The Beast.

You were involved in A Nightmare on Elm Street Part 3*? Why didn't you direct it yourself?*
Two reasons I can think of — first that I was about to direct another film (*Deadly Friend*), and second because I was going through a hellish divorce. But it was fun writing it. My writing partner was Bruce Wagner, who I met at a dinner party at Paul Bartel's house. We had a lot of fun writing together, and if he hadn't helped me, I'd never have been able to finish the script. Much of it was written during preproduction on *Deadly Friend*. Bruce has now gone on to be Hollywood's preeminent novelist.

You jumpstarted several people's careers: Johnny Depp, Skeet Ulrich, Peter Berg, etc. It's a risky move when you come out with a cast full of relative unknowns (as in the case of Scream*, the* Nightmare *series, etc.). Why is it that you sometimes cast famous actors and other times unknowns — does it have anything to do with the faith you have in the project?*
Not really. It's really just a matter of money, or the lack of it, in the film's budget. The films I made like *Serpent and the Rainbow* were all extremely low budget, and thus we didn't have the money to hire any sort of known name. So we just went for talent that we could spot before someone else did. There are a couple of others, too: Sharon Stone's first speaking role (*Deadly*

Blessing), Bruce Willis' first Hollywood work (the *Twilight Zone* episode "Shatterday," shot just before he began *Moonlighting*).

Would you do another Nightmare *sequel? Or you think the franchise is done for good?*
I'd rather create a new franchise, and this time own it myself.

You always try to make horror movies that go one step beyond, as in Scream*, the first* Nightmare*,* New Nightmare *or even* Vampire in Brooklyn. *Which step do you think you should take next in order to keep on surprising people?*
If I told you I'd have to kill you.

Which horror classic would you love to have directed yourself?
Man Bites Dog. I think it's brilliant.

After Music of the Heart*, would you shoot another drama? What was that experience like for you?*
By now I feel like I'm writing a book here… But it was a wonderful experience. Working with Streep, with lots of talented kids and some of the best violinists ever to play, plus working in New York City — it would be hard to think of anything much better.

Why is it that you and Sam Raimi did dramas (we mean Music of the Heart *and* For Love of the Game*) almost at the same time? Just a coincidence?*
I could only guess why Sam did it, but probably because he, like me, thinks of himself as a director, without limits of genre, rather than just a horror film director. Variety is the spice of life.

WES CRAVEN FILMOGRAPHY

as director

2006
Paris, je t'aime (episode: Père-Lachaise, tv series)

2005
RedEye
Cursed

2000
Scream 3

1999
Music of the Heart

1997
Scream 2

1996
Scream

1995
Vampire in Brooklyn

1994
New Nightmare

1992
Nightmare Café (tv series)

1991
The People Under the Stairs

1990
Night Visions (tv)

1989
Shockers

1988
The Serpent and the Rainbow

1986
Deadly Friend
Casebusters (tv)
The Twilight Zone (tv)

1985
The Hills Have Eyes Part II
Chiller (tv)

1984
A Nightmare On Elm Street
Invitation to Hell (tv)

1982
Swamp Thing

1981
Deadly Blessing

1978
Stranger in Our House (tv)

1977
The Hills Have Eyes

1975
Angela, the Fireworks Woman (uncredited)

1972
The Last House on the Left

1971
Together

RICHARD ELFMAN

IF THE LAST NAME rings a bell it might be because Richard is Danny Elfman's brother. Back in the old days, Richard used to command the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo — that's where Danny's band Oingo Boingo came from.

But what makes Mr Elfman really special is the fact that he directed *Forbidden Zone*, one of the strangest movies this side of *Eraserhead*. *Forbidden Zone* featured all kinds of strange things that are way too bizarre to describe here, and it even starred the late, great Joe Spinell. Richard's directing career didn't stop there and he kept on making movies, each one different from the other: together they make for an eclectic yet interesting filmography, one united only by their creator's distinctive, twisted sense of humour. Along with longtime collaborator and co-screenwriter Matthew Bright, Elfman is responsible for features like *Modern Vampires*, starring Casper Van Dien and Natasha Gregson Wagner, and Full Moon Entertainment's *Shrunken Heads*, which featured a group of kids that come back from the dead to unleash voodoo revenge upon their murderers. *Vampires* (which got the third place at 1999's Fantasia Film Festival in Canada) featured an amazing cult cast including Rod Steiger and Udo Kier.

Even if he is best remembered for *Forbidden Zone*, each of Elfman's movies have their own value and style. Another cool one is the short *Date or Disaster*, a spoof of dating reality shows which plays like an episode of Mtv's *Dismissed* gone mad. If you're interested in discovering a new world of cinematic weirdness, Elfman's movies are for you. Especially *Forbidden Zone*… can't wait for that sequel!

NICANOR LORETI Forbidden Zone *has been described as the strangest musical film in movie history. What was it like shooting it? Did you have anything to do with the musical score, composed by your brother Danny?*
RICHARD ELFMAN *Forbidden Zone* must have been the most fun I ever had on a movie set, because I wasn't worried by the reaction of the audience or the critics. What I really wanted to do was to capture in a movie what we had been doing on stage with the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo. The band was changing from being a theatre group to a rock band, and I wanted to preserve the kind of music and what we did on stage. *Forbidden Zone*, which was financed by me almost completely, was made with that purpose… and was also a discharge of pure and crazy energy. Even today it surprises me that it's still so popular. I produced the album of the soundtrack. Part of the music is by older artists whom I wanted to share with a modern audience, and the rest of the music is the first soundtrack by my brother Danny.

Joe Spinell stars in that movie. He's a great actor and I love his work. What was it like working with him?
It was great working with Joe Spinell. He was always a great professional. After the end of the shooting, he wanted to keep the sailor uniform he wore in the movie. And of course I gave it to him!

Shrunken Heads *was produced by Full Moon. What was it like working for them? They have a very particular way of working.*
It was a real adventure! Charlie Band has the energy of an excited penis, and he loves the genre and what he does. *Shrunken Heads* was inspired by an old Humphrey Bogart movie called *Dead End*. It was about the good boys vs. the bad boys in a very poor neighbourhood in the east side of New York. It's a very classical American history, except that in our version the bad boys kill the good boys and then a witch doctor shrinks and revives their heads, so they become little superheroes. Anyway, the shooting was supposed to start in old sets in New York and one week before we started… Charlie sent us to Romania, where shooting was a lot cheaper. I didn't know what I was into until I was on the ship with my director of photography by one side and my production director by the other. This life can be pretty absurd sometimes! The three of us had a really great time in Transylvania, drinking wine and

listening to gypsy music. In the end, we ended up shooting the movie at Paramount in LA, the way we had originally planned.

All your scripts have been written by Matthew Wright. How would you describe your working relationship?
Forbidden Zone was written mostly by me, with Matthew adding to some key scenes. I would say our sick humours work together, but his vision is mostly darker than mine. In the scene in which Joe Spinell plays the drunk sailor father, Matthew originally wrote it for Joe to be meaner and more violent. Finally, I ended up cutting that scene. It's always the same. He wrote the original versions of Shrunken Heads and Modern Vampires, but I always rewrite them and that drives him crazy. Even though I really love and admire Matthew's work, he will be the first to admit he loves to revolt in decadence. I satirise decadence. That's our biggest artistic difference.

Modern Vampires *is a funny bloodsucker movie, with a great cast. How did you get Natasha Gregson Wagner, Casper Van Dien, Udo Kier and Rod Steiger in the same film?*
I was very lucky to have such a great cast in *Modern Vampires*. It was a real honour working with Rod Steiger. Even if he wasn't at his best at the time, he always insisted in doing everything himself. When he was sitting in his trailer and heard I was using a double to run instead of him, Rod would come to me and insist in doing it himself. Casper Van Dien is a real gentleman. Always kind, well educated and hard working... he even helped the crew move things around. And the girls were crazy about him! And Natasha was great too. Did you know she's the daughter of Natalie Wood? I was truly very lucky to have such cool vampires!

Why did you change the title from Revenant *to* Modern Vampires*?*
The American audience didn't know the meaning of the word revenant (which means: the one who returns after death), so the producers wanted something simpler. *Shrunken Heads* was originally called *The Call of Mr Sumatra*. I guess that's the way business is in America!

And were you a big fan of Udo Kier?

I'm a big, big fan of Udo Kier. One of my favourite vampire movies is Andy Warhol's *Dracula*. He has a great vampire death scene in it. I told Udo I had been waiting twenty years to drive a stake through his chest once again.

What can you tell me about your short film, Date or Disaster*? Why did you decide to shoot a short film in the first place?*
Date or Disaster is a satire of the terrible and cruel dating shows that have overrun the country. Do you have some of these over there in Latin America?

Yes, and they also suck.
It wasn't an original idea of mine, but mostly the work of a friend, Daniel Schweiger. He had his hands full so I came in as a director and co-producer. *Date or Disaster* is a little and very funny work of art, but the real merit is Daniel's. It's his humour and his vision.

If you were offered the opportunity to make your dream movie with the perfect casting, what would it be about and who would you call?
Aha! Here's my favourite question. Of course! And, thank God I'm about to make that film right now. I have two dream projects: one, that I'll start shooting very soon, is called *Trio*, and it's the story of my mother, the novelist Claire Elfman, about three old hopeless men who inherit incredible powers. First of all, it will be a great honour to work with my mother and second, our casting director has just been contacted by Martin Landau, Bob Hoskins and Ernest Borgnine! My brother's girlfriend, Bridget Fonda could play the lead. My other dream project, *The Sixth Element*, which we are about to start shooting now, stars Jaime Aymerich, Daniel Schweiger and my son, Bodhi Elfman. My niece, Jenna Elfman, could play a part in a fantastic musical scene featuring music by my brother, Danny Elfman. *The Sixth Element* is a very wild fantastic comedy, which is very important for me, because it's a satire of our out of control psychoanalysed world, and the big drug business that has emerged in the US because of it. I'm the son of two school teachers and the father of two sons. In the US we have eight million children who are addicted to mind adulterant drugs, like Ritalin, and the number is growing enormously. I believe in God, and that man is essentially a spiritual being, not

only a conglomerate of parts that emerged from the earth. I also believe that raising children requires spiritual values and the active participation of the parents, not only drugs and television. Do you know how many psychiatrists are prescribing drugs as addictive as cocaine for simple problems as difficulties with mathematics and misspelling? I'm not joking. *The Sixth Element* will be a pretty funny project and, Spanish spoken friends; we'll also be shooting the movie in Spanish with a bilingual cast [unfortunately *The Sixth Element* was never made].

Which movies and directors do you think influenced your own work?
Well, this week, in terms of favourites I've been watching once again, it's Carlos Saura's movies, especially *Carmen* and *Tango*. *Tango* was shot by the incredible Vittorio Storaro and *Carmen* was shot by the great Teo Escamilla. Teo was about to be the original cinematographer of *Modern Vampires*, but we didn't find the way to make it fit our schedules. I love the work of Fellini, the comedies of Laurel and Hardy, The Three Stooges and Cantinflas [Mexican comedian and stage and film actor], the work of Max Fleischer, and of course the work of Tim Burton. Tim, ironically, used to come to see our live shows with the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo.

Richard Elfman Filmography

as director, unless noted

2009
30 Days to Vegas

2008
28 Days to Vegas

2003
Date or Disaster

1998
Modern Vampires (tv)

1996
Bone Chillers (tv)

1994
Shrunken Heads
Streets of Rage

1989
Oingo Boingo: Skeletons in the Closet/ Private Life

1982
Forbidden Zone

JAMES GUNN

By Nicanor Loreti and Matias Timm

WHERE TO START? James Gunn is a really strange case. He started his career writing *Tromeo & Juliet* for Troma for just $150, but the film went on to become Troma's biggest critical success in years, an outcome that jumpstarted his Hollywood career. He's written scripts as diverse as the 2004 version of *Dawn of the Dead* and the *Scooby-Doo* films. James is a horror fan and loves bloody movies and black humour: his additions to the new *Dawn* include an impressive scene in which the main characters enjoy themselves by shooting "celebrity look-alike zombies." After working at Troma for several years, he decided it was time to grow up, and wrote and starred in (along with a cool cast that included Thomas Haden Church and Rob Lowe) *The Specials* — which had a similar theme to *Mystery Men* but is way better. As usual in Hollywood, *Mystery Men* was the financial success and only a few fortunate people got to see how amazing *The Specials* was. Nevertheless, the film gave James the opportunity to write the first *Scooby-Doo* film: somewhat surprisingly, his style was not compromised at all. There were pot jokes (Scooby and Shaggy are portrayed as slackers,), lesbian insinuations and a surprise ending. He was the first screenwriter to have two films in a row debut at number one at the box office (when *Dawn* and *Scooby-Doo 2* were released) and is so cool that he was even the executive producer on my short film *El Kuervo* — just because he liked the script! I have nothing but admiration for James Gunn's great talent. And his wife Jenna Fisher is beautiful! And his brother Sean the best actor in G*ilmore Girls* by far! Gunn's a winner…

NICANOR LORETI & MATIAS TIMM *Why do you think you were captivated by the horror genre from so young an age?*
JAMES GUNN Back when Lovecraft was writing, they considered what he did 'weird fiction.' Still, today, much of what we call horror is simply 'weird cinema,' with a good amount of violence and suspense thrown in. I suppose I always felt like an oddball, so horror movies really appealed to me for their weirdness. Also, for a kid without much athletic ability, horror movies are like an emotional machismo — I may not be able to kick a soccer ball, but I'm able to sit through all of *Alien* with my eyes open at the age of ten. And, for whatever reason, I liked the gore too. My family was dysfunctional as hell, so watching people get ripped apart physically is what I felt like emotionally. The gore was sort of cathartic.

Most of the greatest horror movies include great scenes of black humour. Do you think horror and humour are codependent? Why?
They're definitely intertwined. An audience will laugh as much at a good horror film as they will at a good comedy. One reason people laugh so much at horror films is they're not expecting it. Laughing is free and natural; there's no pressure to laugh as there would be at, say, *Anchorman*: "Oh, God, I hope this is going to be funny — I really, really hope I'm going to laugh at this next scene." There's also a different kind of laughter in horror films — laughing out of relief after a big scare. Laughing at how the movie 'gotcha.' Laughing at your friend for screeching like a little girl. Laughing at how fucked-up a human being looks after being turned inside-out.

Do you think reading comic books influenced the way you write for the screen?
Yeah, they're both visual mediums. And comics are a freer medium — there are a lot less rules for genre and tone in comics, simply because you can afford to do a series for a lot less money than you can a film. And special effects cost nothing. That kind of freedom of imagination is something I strive for with my films.

Troma was like a trial of fire for you. Are the big studios a meat grinder just like it, but on a bigger scale?

I wouldn't consider either a meat grinder. I get to make money doing what I love! What's better than that? However, Troma is in many ways a small-scale studio. The difference is I really only ever had to answer to one person at Troma — Lloyd Kaufman. And Lloyd, after I was there for a while, let me do whatever I wanted. At a studio, there are many more people to answer to. And I'll also note my Troma experience was not typical. People usually have a more difficult time there than I did. Most people quit in their first couple days.

Are you grateful or resentful towards the whole Troma experience, after all these years?
1000% grateful. In fact, Lloyd and I are currently working on the *Tromeo & Juliet* tenth anniversary Special Edition DVD. My gratitude is also why I continue to appear in Troma's movies, like in their new *Tales from the Crapper*. I'm going to give Lloyd a cameo in whatever film I make next as well.

What is the worst horror movie you ever saw? How would you have made it better?
That'd probably be *The Creeping Terror*. *The Creeping Terror* is essentially a bunch of college students under a piece of carpet. That's the one great thing about it, and the rest is awful. Anything would make that movie better. Smashing myself in the face with a full colostomy bag would have made it better.

Do you think screenwriting is underrated today in Hollywood? Most of the big studio horror films I saw this year had botched endings. Like Taking Lives*, it had an average Argento-like script, but the WORST ending.* Catwoman *had NO script…*
I don't know if I'd say underrated — we get paid a hell of a lot. I'd say editors are underrated. I would say screenwriters are mismanaged. Too many writers on one project fuck things up. Also, there are often too many voices giving notes, and a screenwriter may try to please all of them and, by doing that, you end up with a mess of a film. Too many screenwriters out there

are good at selling themselves and only kind of good at writing. That's a problem, too.

Janusz Kaminski told me [Nic] that: "Hollywood makes shitty movies, but the truth is people want to see them. If people didn't go, we wouldn't make them." He also said: "The money is so good, you end up selling out." Do you agree with this? For what I see, you use Hollywood to make your own projects come true.

I took enough money to be comfortable, and then backed out of straight studio-screenwriting when I was at my most commercial. And I've refused to do rewrites for the past few years. Admittedly, when you're being offered millions for a couple of drafts of a screenplay, it's hard to say no so you can concentrate on doing what you want to do. I love making money. But I'd rather make it from doing something I like doing, something I'm proud of. And right now, that's producing and directing original projects that I think are necessary to keep cinema vibrant. They're still audience-driven projects — but they're riskier, different from what's in the current marketplace.

We think the Japanese have changed the horror genre in that they make movies that actually scare people, because they forego the normal American formulas. Non horror films like Requiem for a Dream *are more shocking than the usual American scarefest. Do you think the future of American horror is in going beyond the established genre formulas?*

Horror films have continually changed to some extent. So much of our horror from the past ten years has been determined by *Scream*, which has gotten really fucking boring. How many times do I need to see a horror movie poster that is essentially five-good-looking-twenty-six-year-old-actors-pretending-to-be-high-schoolers-with-something-vaguely-spooky-in-the-background? But when *Scream* came out it was itself different. Rock'n'roll's the same way. Nirvana came out and hit it big with great, fresh music, and, a few years later, we have Candlebox: a carbon copy of a carbon copy of a carbon copy. Japanese films today, like *The Eye* or, my favourite, *Audition*, are fresh approaches to horror. And horror comics, like Junji Ito's *Uzumaki*, are discovering new, scary things — in *Uzumaki*'s case, an evil shape. I hope we see more of those new flavours in original American cinema.

What do you think the future of horror will be?
I think the biggest problem with horror is that we get stuck in generational ruts, where only one type of horror film is churned out repeatedly for ten years or so. What I'd like to see is a variety of horror films coming out at the same time. I'd like to see more freedom. I'd like to see more good acting in horror films. A lot of horror movies have great terror or action sequences, but almost no awareness of character or drama. I'd like those things to be as important as the rest. Take a movie like *Final Destination 2* — which I love in a lot of ways — but if it had some semblance of characters and plot it could really be great. I'd also like to see NC-17 films become commercially viable.

What aids do you use for writing? Do you listen to evocative music, for example? Write with the tv on?
I keep it pretty quiet. Every once in a while I'll write a scene to a particular piece of music.

Do you base your characters in real life acquaintances?
Not usually. Sometimes I think different characters are different aspects of my own personality. This would definitely be true of *Dawn*.

We believe the seventies and eighties were the golden age of horror, but that might be only nostalgic, since we grew up during the eighties.
I think the seventies were the golden age of film in general. The eighties had a number of outstanding horror films — *The Thing*, all of Cronenberg's stuff, *Re-Animator*, and so on — but there was a lot of absolute shit, too. In truth, most decades have about the same percentage of good-to-bad films, but the bad fade away and the good survive. Things always look better in the rearview mirror.

What scares you the most? Did you ever plan on writing a hardcore horror script based on your own fears?
I'm always trying to scare myself. Satan shit scares me the most. That's one of the reasons my favourite horror film is probably *Rosemary's Baby*. Eternal damnation is much scarier then just dying. Someday I'll make my Satan movie. I'm gearing up for it. Zombies also scared the crap out of me.

That's why I did *Dawn*. And I'm a big fan of paranoia films, too, where your loved ones turn against you. Both *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* have elements of this. One of the greatest paranoia scenes of all time is at the end of *The Man Who Haunted Himself*, where Roger Moore confronts his own doppelgänger after the doppelgänger has taken over his family, and his family refuses to believe he's really himself. The movie's worth seeing for that scene alone. The other things that scare me are spooky little girls — like in *Night of the Living Dead* or *The Bad Seed* — and pregnancies gone wrong. And deformed infants. *Dawn* has all those things in it. My new script *SLiTHER* takes fucked-up little girls and out-of-control pregnancies into a whole new stratosphere.

If there's a movie that you like and everyone else hates it, do you think it's 'a bad movie but I like it' or 'it's a misunderstood masterpiece'?
If I enjoy a movie, I would never call it a bad movie. Likewise, I think masterpieces are few and far between. There are some movies I like that many other people don't — I truly enjoyed *Alien: Resurrection*, for instance. I liked it a lot more than *Alien³*.

As an Alan Moore fan, did you resent the fact that The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen *sucked?*
I didn't see it, so I didn't resent it at all. Alan Moore is probably my favourite living writer. His comics remain his comics, and nothing outside them can change that. People have this incredibly fucked up belief that a movie adaptation somehow kills whatever the source was. It's ridiculous. Like the people who thought the new *Dawn* would somehow destroy Romero's *Dawn* forever — giving the remake some power it only has because they're giving it that power. People need to be more secure in what they love.

Is there any deceased horror master that you would bring back from the dead (using voodoo, of course)?
Well, voodoo scares me almost as much as Satanism, so I wouldn't want to use it on anyone. But I'd love to meet Lovecraft. And Hitchcock. And James Whale. However, if I was already damning myself to hell by bringing them

back with voodoo, I'd have them do something interesting, like fight to the death in a pit.

Who would you like to adapt your novel, The Toy Collector*, for the big screen?*
I've refused to sell it on a number of occasions. If it was someone I really respected, like Spike Jonze or Terry Zwigoff, I'd let 'em have it and see what happens.

What was production on SLiTHER like and did you enjoy working with Michael Rooker and Gregg Henry?
I actually had more freedom on *SLiTHER* than anything I've ever worked on. I was the director, first of all. But also, Paul Brooks, who financed the film with Gold Circle, let me know before we even started working together he was going to trust me creatively. He was true to his word — at least he has been so far, we haven't finished cutting yet. But, during shooting, I had no interference whatsoever, from Gold Circle or Universal. They let me cast exactly who I wanted, and shoot it the way I saw it. I was able to keep it extreme and unique. There isn't anything out there like it right now, and I'm real proud of that. Rooker and Gregg Henry were both terrific. They're very different characters in person. Rooker's outlandish, a complete — and I mean this as a compliment — nutcase. He brings a lot of dynamic energy to the set, like having a rambunctious but humourous three year old at a dinner party. Gregg, on the other hand, is very mellow, very professional. They're both real class human beings though. I love them both, and can't wait to write more roles for them, and direct them in more films. I was fortunate with the entire casting of the film. Everyone was a real team player, and the actors took their commitment to the emotional side of things way beyond what you'd normally see in a horror film. And people like Elizabeth Banks and Nathan Fillion are just great people to have on set. Their energy and enthusiasm invigorates the whole crew. It was something I learned from working with Matt Lillard on the *Scooby* movies. He's a real good presence, not just on camera, but on set as well. He's not an actor who needs to prop himself up above others — he treats everyone with respect. This behind the scenes stuff creates a tremendous amount of positive energy that can

help what you're putting on screen. I made sure everyone I hired had that reputation. And it really paid off, especially on a shoot as physically and emotionally rigorous as *SLiTHER* was.

What was it like working on The Specials*? It was your first experience working with Hollywood people, right?*
The Specials was real difficult. I fought a lot on that one: with Craig Mazin, the director, and with Jamie Kennedy, who I was living with at the time. They're both good people, but I didn't have as much control as I probably wanted, and that was difficult for me. I had just gone through a serious breakup with my girlfriend at the time, and was personally and emotionally a mess. I loved that script. It was precious to me. It got me every bit of work I got in Hollywood. There were some real fine people on the project: Tom Church and Judy Greer and my brother Sean, and the producer, Mark Altman. But I got a little too caught up in the drama of everything going on, on set, and so forth. Today I'm much more professional. I like having a good time, but it's definitely less important to me than making a good movie. But, back then, well, put a fan boy in a room full of women in superhero costumes and it's likely to fuck him up.

How is it that you got offered the job of writing Dawn of the Dead*? It's more of a re-imagining than a remake, was that your idea?*
Eric Newman, over at Strike Entertainment, called me up and asked me if I was interested in writing *Dawn of the Dead*. He said, if I was, that he would buy the rights and we could do it. I had never been interested in doing a remake before, but I was instantly inspired by the possibility of taking the central concept (people trapped in a mall during a zombie apocalypse) and telling a completely different story around it. I wrote a lot of it in a Marriot hotel room in Queensland, Australia, while I was shooting the first *Scooby-Doo* movie.

Please tell us about the short film Hamster PSA. *How did you get the idea to shoot it?*
Oh, Jesus. It isn't really a short film — it was something I shot for Troma's Edge tv, along with a shitload of other stuff. We used to shoot a couple hours

worth of stuff a day, and this was one of them. It's basically just a send-up of Public Service Announcements. This one was meant for hamsters only, telling them not to eat their babies, as hamsters are prone to do, because it fucks kids up. I also did one with Sgt Kabukiman talking about the evils of masturbating.

What's LolliLove *about and when will it be released officially?*
LolliLove is a mockumentary about a young, wealthy couple, James and Jenna Gunn, who set out to form a charity to change the lives of homeless people by giving them lollipops with cheery slogans on them. In a lot of ways, it's the most extreme thing I've ever worked on — the humour is very dark and it breaches every taboo topic you can imagine. My wife Jenna Fischer, who's currently on the American version of *The Office* on NBC, directed it and stars in it with me. Friends of ours like Judy Greer, Lloyd Kaufman, and Linda Cardellini have cameos. We made it for a couple thousand bucks for fun, but it started getting picked up by film festivals, and people seem to love it. It will be released by Troma on DVD in the near future.

Tell us about the short films Tube *and* The Swidge.
I'm involved with an organisation called Instant Films. We make films in forty eight hours: we start writing them on Friday night and show them Sunday evening at a small festival. Writers, actors, and directors are randomly chosen out of a bag to work together. I wrote both the films. *Tube* is a lot of fun. It's about a man who finds his wife is cheating on him with a tube sock puppet. It's pretty emasculating. *The Swidge* is a little harder to explain — it was directed by my friend Pete Alton, who shot and edited *LolliLove*. I think you can see them both at instantfilms. com.

Are you proud El Kuervo *was selected for the Fantasia Film Festival in Canada?*
It was the proudest moment of my life.

JAMES GUNN FILMOGRAPHY

as writer, unless noted

2009
PG Porn (2008-09, tv series)

2008
Humanzee! (tv series)
Sparky & Mikaela (tv series)

2005
SLiTHER (also director)
El Kuervo (short film, exec producer only)

2004
LolliLove (also actor, exec producer)
The Swidge
Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed (also exec producer)
Dawn of the Dead
Tube

2003
The Ghouls (actor only)
Doggie Tails, Vol. 1: Lucky's First Sleep-Over (actor only)
Melvin Goes to Dinner (actor only)
Man Who Invented the Moon (exec producer only)

2002
Scooby -Doo

2000
The Specials (also actor, coproducer)
Citizen Toxie: The Toxic Avenger IV (actor)

1999
Terror Firmer

1997
Sgt Kabukiman Public Service Announcement (tv, also director, actor)
Hamster PSA (also director)
The Tromaville Café (director, series creator)

1996
Tromeo and Juliet (also assoc director, actor, and exec producer)

JACK HILL

WITHOUT JACK HILL THERE wouldn't be any Quentin Tarantino. Fact. He's a filmmaker that's showed us exploitation movies could be both artsy and interesting, instead of just empty products whose sole purpose is to deliver T&A. Films like *Coffy* and *Foxy Brown*, both starring Pam Grier, are still revered all over the world by numerous blaxploitation fanatics, and Hill's sophomore effort, *Spider Baby* (starring Lon Chaney Jr and Sid Haig) is one of the top ten cult epics of that decade. Hill has worked for Roger Corman, directed women in prison flicks, and even a sword and sorcery feature without losing his touch. Well, maybe he did in his last film, but it wasn't his fault. At least, that what's he says. This guy is a one of a kind filmmaker who helped shape the way independent film is made today.

NICANOR LORETI *You first spotted Pam Grier when you were casting* The Big Doll House. *What made you think she could become a star?*
JACK HILL I didn't have any such thoughts at the time. I just thought she could handle the role and that she had a strong presence and authority.

I read that you had to reshoot some material for Dementia 13, *because Roger Corman requested it. Did you have to shoot alternate stuff or just additional material? How much of your work can be seen in the finished film?*
Little bits and pieces that connect the action all through the film, and one entire sequence that was needed to extend the running time of the film.

I heard that Foxy Brown *was originally thought of as being a sequel to* Coffy. *What happened?*
The sales department of AIP decided that sequels weren't doing well and somebody there came up with the name 'Foxy Brown'. Everything else remained the same.

In Coffy*, there's that scene in which she has razorblades in her afro. I thought maybe it wasn't in the script, and you came up with it later. Who's idea was it?*
It was Pam's idea. She had some familiarity with such matters, you see.

How did you start to work for AIP?
My agent recommended me to Larry Gordon, who was at the time head of production there. I met with Larry and he told me what kind of film he wanted, I worked up a storyline which he liked and we went ahead.

There are a lot of stories about the making of The Terror. *One says that the movie was made in three days. I read that (aside from Corman, Francis Ford Coppola and you) Jack Nicholson and Monte Hellman were also involved in the direction of the film. Is any of this at all true?*
Roger Corman shot three days with Boris Karloff from a short script by Leo Gordon. Francis wrote a new script around it, directed those scenes, took that material but unfortunately neglected to tell the DP that an entire sequence was supposed to be day-for-night, so it was unusable. Also the story didn't make much sense. Roger asked me write a new script that would use as much of Francis' footage as possible, and Monte directed those scenes. Roger then shot one more day on another AIP set. I shot bits and pieces of material to fill in the continuity, supervised the editing and directed the dialogue replacement. Contrary to what has been written, neither Dennis Jakob nor Jack Nicholson directed any of the picture.

How did you get Lon Chaney Jr to sing the title song for Spider Baby*? Was it your idea?*
Ronald Stein, the composer, suggested it and Lon was very happy to do it. Ronnie wrote the music and lyrics with some input from me.

That movie is also known as Cannibal Orgy, or the Maddest Story Ever Told, *and* The Liver Eaters. *Which was the original title and, if you changed it, why did you do so?*
Cannibal Orgy, or the Maddest Story Ever Told was the original title, a takeoff on *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. When the distributor finally acquired the film, he changed the title to *Spider Baby*, a stroke of genius beyond my capabilities.

What about Track of the Vampire*? I know it's one of those AIP movies that used footage from unknown European films. Did you have fun doing that kind of work, or did you do it just for the cash and then move on to something better?*
It was an assignment and a challenge, and I not only enjoyed doing it at the time but learned a great deal from it.

The Fear Chamber *starred Boris Karloff. What was it like to work with him?*
A great pleasure. He was a great man, a true professional.

Quentin Tarantino is a great fan of your work, and paid homage to it in Jackie Brown. *How does it feel to have influenced him, along with an entire generation of filmmakers? Because I think that if you hadn't made those movies, someone else would have, but they probably wouldn't have been as good or as successful as they were…*
I don't know what you mean by 'homage', other than my name appearing over a doorbell. Of course it's a very pleasant surprise to see that my work is being appreciated by a whole new generation of movie fans. I never could have imagined such a thing at the time.

Which of your movies are you happiest with. amd which one do you think could have been a lot better??
I'm equally fond of *Spider Baby* and *Pit Stop*. For very different reasons I think *Foxy Brown* could have been much better had I been allowed more time to write it and to shoot it.

Jack Hill Filmography

as director

1982
Sorceress

1975
Switchblade Sisters

1974
Foxy Brown
The Swinging Cheerleaders

1973
Coffy

1972
The Big Bird Cage

1971
The Big Doll House
The Incredible Invasion
Isle of the Snake People

1970
Ich, ein Groupie

1969
The Winner/Pit Stop

1968
The Fear Chamber/La Cámara del Terror
House of Evil/Dance of Death

1966
Mondo Keyhole
Blood Bath/Track of the Vampire

1965
Portrait in Terror

1964
Spider Baby, or the Maddest Story Ever Told

1963
The Terror

1962
The Playgirls and the Bellboy

1960
The Host
The Wasp Woman (uncredited)

LLOYD KAUFMAN

WHAT CAN YOU SAY about Lloyd Kaufman that hasn't been said before? This guy's company, Troma Entertainment, has changed independent filmmaking forever. Through landmark films like *The Toxic Avenger* and *Class of Nuke 'em High*, Kaufman has created a style often imitated but never bettered. This guy hasn't sold out either, and has been making extreme films for over thirty years. He's worked for the industry longer than that and is an unbelievable example of a nobody who made it big without compromising. Throughout the years, Troma has been through it all: it nearly even hit the big time with *The Toxic Crusaders* cartoon, but it didn't happen and they never became mainstream enough to be destroyed. Kaufman's made comedies, horror films, parodies, and never taken himself seriously: that's the reason he's been in the business for so long. He's also jumpstarted the careers of people like James Gunn and Barak Epstein. His last effort, a how-to video called *Make your Own Damn Movie!* (a companion to the book of the same name) has received rave reviews everywhere (perhaps the best ones since *The New York Times* gave *Tromeo and Juliet* a thumbs up). Talking to Kaufman was a real treat, even more so because he is, in my opinion, another of the industry's few remaining mavericks. Long live Troma, Toxie loves you!

NICANOR LORETI *What do you think of the state of independent cinema now in the US?*

LLOYD KAUFMAN Well, I think there's no such thing as independent cinema. They are trying to destroy anything that resembles it, with any

means they can: Sundance admits movies that cost much more than a million dollars to make. The studios buy all interesting stuff out there and put it on a shelf. Troma is the one independent studio that is out there and survived. It's our thirtieth anniversary now, and they won't give us press. They will give a lot of press to the Sundance Film Festival, but they won't bother to let people know Troma is out here.

We need a revolution right?
Yes. The best movies that are coming out nowadays are straight out of independent filmmakers, people who have something to say about the world. People who have an interesting view, a different view. Even our movies at Troma have a view of the world, a Tromatic view, but a view at the end.

What about all the new filmmakers Troma has influenced over the years?
Well, that makes me really proud, because all over the world, when I travel to film festivals, I get to see films by people who were obviously influenced by Troma or are Troma fans. I remember meeting Peter Jackson and having him express his fanaticism for Troma. He's even done a very Tromatic film, *Meet the Feebles*. You can really see the influence in that one.

A lot of big Hollywood people had some of their first opportunities working for Troma or Troma acquired movies, like Samuel L. Jackson, Billy Bob Thornton or, well, even James Gunn.

What did you think about the Lord of the Rings *movies?*
Well, I'm truly not interested in the source material at all. You can tell he's a great filmmaker, but I'm not interested in the *Lord of the Rings* books. I tried to read the first one and it was so long and boring I never finished. Too much description of stuff.

I know Troma's War *was severely cut by the MPAA [Motion Picture Association of America] when it opened originally and was released uncut on DVD. Now the standards have changed, do you think it would have had a chance at getting an R rating?*
Well, not really. The MPAA is the devil [laughs]. They are up to destroy anything resembling independent cinema or out of the Hollywood

mainstream. I mean, they gave *The Passion of the Christ* an R rating! The last half an hour is as sadistic as they come! And it's not bloody and gory in a comical way as a Troma movie can be, it's downright real: it's meant to be real. But they don't care. Mel Gibson directed it, so it gets an R rating. But if it had been an independent production, it would have been a scandal.

Yes, of course. The same with Saving Private Ryan.
That's right. You see that one, and they butcher people all over the place. But a year before we come out with *Tromeo and Juliet* and they tell us we have to be careful!

It's a conspiracy!
That's right. They don't care about anything that resembles imagination. But these are hard times we're living in.

And with the government you have. . .
Don't even mention that, they can be listening [laughs]! In fact, they probably are! *[Suddenly, we hear a strange noise across the phone.]* You see? It's them! Probably out to destroy us... Anyway, I think the future of filmmaking is in anyone who gets a camera and sets out to make a movie without thinking about anything else than love for the craft. That's what prevails in the end. You can see that in independent movies, there's a love for the craft that most Hollywood productions are lacking.

Everyone talks about the whole Troma experience being somehow hard to survive. What do you need to survive it?
Well, you've got to have a great love for movies and filmmaking. And you shouldn't care about anything else than the film you're working on. I've worked with people that said they were willing to sacrifice themselves for a film but then couldn't take it. But in the end, it's your will to sacrifice and survive that will keep you alive in this business. That's how I started and that's how I got this far.

Yeah, you even worked as a production assistant and assistant director right? Tell me about your experience working with John G. Avildsen, whom you worked with on Rocky *and* Joe.
John was my mentor; he taught me all I had to know about filmmaking. He's one of the greatest. He really knows a lot about filmmaking and you can tell that when you see his films. You know, they originally wanted someone else to play Rocky in that movie, they wanted James Caan, I think. But Stallone wanted the part and John fought for him, too. He's one of a kind, not everyone would have done that.

When you did Tromeo and Juliet*, did you think about approaching the material somehow differently or was it that way from the beginning?*
Well, the idea to use the verse was there from the beginning but there were some changes that James Gunn had a lot to do with. We did a lot of drafts since we originally started working on the material. However, the end result is one of Troma's best movies so far.

The cast of Tromeo *was especially good, and I was surprised by the love scene: it had a lot of sentimentality, it was rough but real.*
We were really, really lucky with that cast and that film. Everyone was so focused. Will Keenan was great, and those were some of the best performances in Troma history.

You're currently working on Poultrygeist. *What's it about?*
Oh, it's a very special film, about chicken zombies taking revenge on humans. It's like a satire on the McDonald's generation. It's called *Poultrygeist: Attack of the Chicken Zombies* and we have a big budget for Troma, like $500,000. It's nothing for big studios, but for us it's a lot of money. Obviously, we could use some more [laughs].

Would you do a movie for a big studio if they offered you a lot of money?
Yes, if they let me do whatever I want. But that will never happen, of course [laughs]. They want to have control on absolutely everything and that kills creativity.

LLOYD KAUFMAN FILMOGRAPHY

as director

2009
Direct Your Own Damn Movie!

2008
Splendor and Wisdom

2006
Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead
Debbie Rochon Confidential: My Years in Tromaville Exposed!
The King of Cult: Lloyd Kaufman's Video Diary (uncredited)

2005
Make Your Own Damn Movie!

2004
Tales from the Crapper

2002
Citizen Toxie: The Toxic Avenger IV
Troma's Edge tv (tv series)
All the Love You Cannes!

1999
Terror Firmer

1997
The Tromaville Café (tv series)

1996
Tromeo and Juliet

1994
Troma Theatre (tv series)

1993
The Troma System

1991
Sgt. Kabukiman N. Y. P. D.

1989
The Toxic Avenger Part III: The Last Temptation of Toxie
The Toxic Avenger, Part II

1988
Troma's War

1986
Class of Nuke 'Em High

1985
The Toxic Avenger

1984
Stuck On You!

1983
The First Turn On!!

1982
Waitress!

1980
Squeeze Play

1975
The Divine Obsession

1973
Ha Balash Ha'Amitz Shvartz/Big Gus, What's the Fuss

1972
The Newcomers

1971
The Battle of Love's Return

1969
The Girl Who Returned

IRVIN KERSHNER

BEST KNOWN FOR DIRECTING *The Empire Strikes Back*, arguably the best *Star Wars* film, Irvin Kershner has spent his entire career making consistently good movies. After decades in the film industry, Kershner is one of the few old school filmmakers who live by their own rules. Working independently or for hire, his movies have always been worth seeing, no matter the genre. And he's done them all: exploitation, comedy, drama, sci fi and even a Bond film. After a long time spent directing documentaries, he decided it was a good time to become what he always wanted to be — a cinematographer. Since it wasn't that easy getting into the business, he chose to be the next best thing, a film director. His first movie, *Stakeout on Dope Street*, proved he could make a watchable film with just the smallest budget. Since then, he's been involved in a lot of small classics like *A Fine Madness* (starring Sean Connery as a poet) and *The Eyes of Laura Mars* (based on a screenplay by John Carpenter). He also directed the satire *S*P*Y*S*, the very good tv movie *Traveling Man*, *RoboCop 2* (the troubled sequel to Paul Verhoeven's hit), teamed up with Connery once more for *Never Say Never Again*, and even appeared as an actor in Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*. It was an interesting chat, and I was amazed by his thoughts on the *Star Wars* films (especially the new ones) and the excessive use of CGI today. Who knows what could have happened if he had directed *Episode 1* or *2*? I suspect he would have added another classic to his résumé.

NICANOR LORETI *Can you tell me about your first film,* Stakeout on Dope Street*? How did you get to do it? Roger Corman produced it, right?*

IRVIN KERSHNER First of all, it was not for Roger Corman.

No? I want to know more about that…
I put that film together. I had just done a documentary show, a tv show that was very important about all the things that were happening in Los Angeles and I left it because I thought three and a half years making documentaries was enough, and decided that I had learned a lot about what was happening with dope in the city, with the heroin, so I took my friend and we wrote the story and we went out to raise some money but we needed $10,000 more, so we went to Roger and we signed a contract and all he did was invest. He had nothing to do with the picture.

So he didn't produce it, he was just an investor.
Yes. His name was not on it, he had nothing to do with it, except for that. We made that picture ourselves.

That's funny because people mostly believe it was produced by him.
Yeah, everybody has written about that and that's how that rumour got started, but he did invest $10,000 and he made about $200,000 from it [laughs]. It was very good relationship because he was a friend and sometimes he asked me to help him with his scripts, and we signed that contract and he gave us the money. Without it we couldn't have made the picture. But he was not a producer; he was not anything on the picture. Later, we sold the picture to Warner Bros. as a full feature. The whole film cost $30,000.

That's almost nothing.
But only $22,000 was cash and $8,000 was given to us by Consolidated Film Lab. So we made it for $22,000 cash. And you know who shot the picture? Haskell Wexler. But his name is not on it.

Why?
Because he was trying to get in the union. It was keeping everybody out at the time, so he couldn't put his name on it. But he shot the film. The whole lot of it.

What made you decide to make a feature film? Because you were making documentaries until then.
Yes, I was making documentaries at that moment. I made them in the Middle East, in Iran, in Lebanon, in Greece and Turkey. I was making documentaries and then I came to LA and started this television show [*Confidential File*] and I did documentaries for it for three and a half years and then I decided that it was time to make a feature, so I took my documentaries all over to the studios and said: "I wanna be a cameraman! Look at the work I'm doing!" In fact, Haskell Wexler became a friend because he saw my camerawork and he was so impressed by it that he took my films back to Chicago to show them to the camera union there. You see, I wanted to be a cinematographer, but I couldn't get in. To do that you had to have a relative or somebody working in the business at the time. So I decided I'll become a director [laughs]. And that was it. But I really enjoy working with the camera a lot.

Yes, one can see that in your movies. They are not the kinds of films in which the camera stands still waiting for something to happen. Everyone seems to think that those first movies are among your best.
That's completely true. My first movies are very personal, very human, but Hollywood does not really like that. So what happens is that you get tired and you spend years without shooting and then you decide to show them that you can still do it and accept a big studio production. So then they give you another project. But I never did a movie in which I wasn't sure I could do a good job. For instance, when I did *The Return of a Man Called Horse*, I just did it because I studied the Indian culture and thought the first one was unfair with it. I also think my movie is better than the first one.

You've done a lot of sequels. What do you think about directing follow ups?
Well, I don't think about them as just sequels. I've had different reasons to accept every movie they've offered me.

I want to leap forward in time and ask you about a favourite of mine which is this tv movie you made called Traveling Man.
Oh, yes, *Traveling Man*. I did that for HBO.

I truly love that one. I used to watch it over and over when I was young.
You did see it, huh? It's a good film. A very truthful one, and I had a very good cameraman from Atlanta, Georgia. Bill Waigers. We shot it all in Atlanta, Georgia. It was done in twenty four days.

Only twenty four days?
Yeah. We had very little time. We really shot fast. But I really liked working with John Lithgow and Jonathan Silverman. Wonderful, wonderful actors.

Was there any room for improvisation on the dialogue? Lithgow seems to be having real fun with the character.
I enjoyed very much making that movie. I thought the girl that John Lithgow was involved with in the film was an extraordinary actress [Margaret Colin]. She's from Broadway. I thought she was wonderful. There are also some very, very good scenes in it. But it's not the type of material that Hollywood likes. Hollywood likes action today. And they like sentimentality. And I don't like sentimentality [laughs]. I like truth and emotion.

And that film is very real indeed.
You know, I'd love to come back to Buenos Aires someday. I was only there once

Yes, last year. I wanted to talk to you then but the people from the Mar del Plata Film Festival said there was not enough time.
I would love to go back there. I thought it was the most beautiful city and I met an extraordinary gentleman, a photographer there, Aldo Cesta. So I'd love to go back sometime. Is the economical situation getting better?

Little by little, but not too much. We have a new president, the best we've had in thirty years, but that's not saying much.
But he's a good president, though.

Well, he's better than Menem [laughs].

I think that he's not corrupt and he's really trying hard. I try to read everything about Argentina; I really fell in love with the place. The people are absolutely marvelous.

People like your movies a lot here, especially The Eyes of Laura Mars *and* The Empire Strikes Back.
I may still do a film there soon. I'm trying to make a film now, an independent production. I hope you hear about it soon. That is, if I can get all the money together [laughs]. In America, independent films are not doing very well. They shoot hundreds of them and maybe six or eight get on the screen at the end of the year. They don't encourage the young directors here. They encourage them just to make Hollywood pictures.

Yes, everyone wants to get into Hollywood and make big movies and big bucks quick, right?
Yes, big Hollywood action pictures, like *Spider-Man* and all that stuff, you know? They only care about the type of films that are made for adolescents. But there are other types of audiences out there that want to see something truthful, something beautiful. Not special effects fests. We are all getting a little tired of special effects. These movies look like they were made by fourteen year old boys. And violence! My God, I'm so tired of it that I don't even want to go and see the pictures with all the violence that's involved! I don't wanna see them. I don't want it to come into my brain [laughs]! We have enough violence in reality to go and sit there and see people killed. I'm tired. I don't wanna see that. I think it's terrible, really terrible.

What happened with RoboCop 2*? I know you wanted to make a different movie to the one you ended up with.*
Yes, a very different movie. But you see, I was called in one year into production. The film was slated for a two year production to get it ready for the special effects and the story. And they hired a director and for one year he didn't get the storyboards, he didn't get anything worked out, so they fired him after a year and then they asked me desperately if I could do the picture in just one year. And I wanted to keep the same writer, who was a comic book writer.

Yeah, Frank Miller.
Frank Miller, right. And so we went to work and started writing a script, which had a lot of very interesting elements. But mainly it was a love story. It was a love story between a man that was only a brain and a woman, a police woman. And by the time we got through with the studio, with everybody, then it became like another *RoboCop* film. I put in a few things that I had originally thought, but still I couldn't get what I wanted. I couldn't put the love story that I wanted. It would have made a beautiful film with the action and the love story. It would have been great. But they just kept the action and discarded everything else. You see, I believe that a woman can fall in love with a man that is only a brain. A woman can fall in love with a man that is ugly, who's short, who's too fat, who's too thin. A smart woman really goes for the brain of the man... And the pocket [laughs]. Especially the pocket.

Well, that's not what Hollywood seems to think.
No. But, in that case, I never made the picture I wanted to make.

So you don't like it the way it is. Is there any stuff that you do like in it?
Well, I think I did some very good work in it. It's not what I really wanted to make. I was so busy... I had one year. In nine weeks I had to get a script, find the locations, set up the special effects and start shooting. Just nine weeks. That's virtually impossible. But we did it, we pulled it off. And I delivered the picture on time for the July 4th weekend. Because the company had already picked it in advance. So I did it as a favor to Mike Maravoy, who was the head of the studio [Orion] at the time. And since I wasn't doing my own film, because I couldn't get the money for what I wanted to do, I agreed to direct *RoboCop 2*. I worked very hard and I did my best. I do think that there are some very good things in it.

Yeah, it's pretty good for a sequel.
But it's not a love story.

Please, tell me about the Star Wars *movie you directed. Everyone says that* The Empire Strikes Back *is the best of them all. Why did you accept the challenge to direct it?*

I had never made science fiction or special effects or anything. And when George Lucas asked me if I wanted to make the picture, the fist thing I said was: "No!" I said: "I don't wanna make a second picture to *Star Wars*, which was so good and successful." And then he kept asking me to do it and said : "But I want this picture to be better than *Star Wars*." I told him: "Yes, but I can only do a film if I'm left alone." And then he said: "It's your film. I will not go to England, it's all yours. I will only go there to visit. You go there and do the film you want." So we worked for three months on the script in Los Angeles until we got the script that we all liked and then I went to England, did the storyboards and it took almost three years of my life to make it. It's a long time. I spent a year doing storyboards for most of the special effects you see in the movie. And George left me alone. That was very, very good. He kept his word. And in the end, he liked the picture. The reason why he wanted the picture made like he said, "bigger and better than *Star Wars*," is because, if it worked, he could make more of them. And it is bigger and better, twice as big. But if the second one did not work, it would be the end of *Star Wars*. And Fox did not want me. They wanted a young man that had not done half the things I had done as a director. They said I was too old. They said they wanted a young man because it's for young people.

Really? Unbelievable! Those studio guys never get it…
I told them: "I was young once [laughs]. And I remember being young. As a matter of fact I think I'm still young!" So George would not let go. He said: "This is who I want and I'm gonna stick to Kershner because he's the right one." And he was right. I was the right one. But I think it was really stupid of them to say that they needed a young director. That's like saying that a movie about some children should be shot by a child. Really stupid. In fact, the studios are never right about most things. That's why they are not making so much money nowadays. They are investing too much money in a few big, enormous films and what they should do is use that money and make a lot of smaller, better movies. They should make more films like they used to. I insist, they should make smaller films. And the stars… The stars are deciding what pictures are being made. Without the stars you can't make a movie today. And that's wrong. If the star says "Yes" — they make a picture. If the star says "No" — they don't make it.

That's the problem with the industry. That damn star system [laughs].
Let me tell you what Orson Welles thought about it. I heard him talk once and he said: "The problem I've had all my life in film is that the real business in Hollywood are the stars. The films they wanna do are made, and the ones the stars don't wanna do are not made." That's it. And the stars are of course backed up by the agents and they protect the stars and make sure that they make the biggest pictures. Because that way, they'll make more money. The agents in America have a much bigger role than they do in other countries. I have a feeling that the agents in other countries like England, Spain, Italy... they are there to help the client. In America, the client seems to work for the agent [laughs]. Did you ever notice?

Yes, the actors do what they are 'advised' to do, mostly. Why didn't you direct The Return of the Jedi*? I know they offered it to you.*
Oh, halfway through the picture, George asked me if I wanted to direct *Jedi*. And what happened was that I did not want to spend another few years doing the same kind of film. Also, I knew what the idea was and it didn't appeal to me. I wanted to go out and make my own pictures. I didn't want to lose another three years. And of course, he ran into a lot of problems doing that movie. A lot. The making of *Jedi* was full of problems.

You can see that when you watch it.
Oh, yeah. It's full of them. Because they couldn't cut it together. And the director didn't direct it.

What do you mean? Richard Marquand wasn't good enough for the task?
Exactly. George and my assistant director directed it. The actors wouldn't work for the director. George kept that very quiet, but it was not a good relationship between Marquand and Lucas. It was a very bad one, in fact.

And what do you think about the new Star Wars *movies?*
Well, I think they are cold. I think what's happening is that George Lucas is depending on his company ILM to make the pictures for him. He should be depending on the script and the actors. It's not good storytelling. I want to see some humour, some true feelings, adventure. I think that only children

can like these new movies. And worst of all, he's got wonderful actors — like Samuel Jackson, for instance — and they don't do anything! They just walk around and sit there. And Yoda is not the same character that I directed. Yoda has a big sense of humour, he never gets angry, and I don't think he has to jump around with a sword in his hand [laughs]. He has too much power to do that. In the second movie, he's angry. Since when is Yoda angry? He tells Luke Skywalker: "Don't be angry. Anger leads to suffering." So, you know, these new films are full of problems. But children like them, and they are making a lot of money, so everybody is happy.

Well, not everybody. Older fans are not.
Well, I hear that all the time. But George thinks he can keep making them, on and on. And he keeps doing it because he does it for an audience of young people. And in that way, he succeeds. So that's fine with me. You know, nobody has all the answers. It's film and it's always changing. Every ten years it's changed. The acting changes, the humour changes, the look of the film changes. You notice that. It changes because movies are a living thing. And it reflects the culture. And the culture is also changing all the time and nowadays it changes faster than ever in the history of the world. So films show that or should show it: Hollywood doesn't always.

I wanted to ask you about The Eyes of Laura Mars. *I know John Carpenter wrote that one.*
Oh, I threw that script out [laughs]. I was set up to do the picture and I read the script and I said no. I just thought it was awful. And a week later, they came back to me, Jon Peters came to me and he said they wanted me to make it. I said: "If you want me to do it, I'll have to make changes." And he said: "OK,OK, do it." So I hired a writer and we started rewriting the script until there was almost nothing left from the original script. I didn't like the Carpenter script. It had a lot of violence and it had no meaning. It just wasn't mysterious. It was just full of violence. I put the fashion business in it. That wasn't there before and it gave it a tone. Without that it was nothing. So I tried to give it a form, and also thought the actors were very good but the hardest part was working on the script. The writer I was working with had a heart attack. And we had to change writers and we continued while

we were shooting. So he left the picture before we even started and had to get another writer and had to continue working on the script while we were shooting to get it right. We changed almost everything in the script. We didn't have one before. This Carpenter script was not used. The only thing they had in common was that they were about a woman who had visions. Nothing else remained. The dialogue and the characters are different, everything's different. But he does make good pictures, John Carpenter. Different kinds of pictures than the ones I make. I'm much more interested in characterisation.

You've worked twice with Sean Connery, in A Fine Madness *and* Never Say Never Again.
Oh, yes, he plays a poet in New York in *A Fine Madness*. It's a very good picture. The only problem with it was that Jack Warner didn't like the music I put on it, by a great composer. He took the score and put a whole orchestra on it, after me rolling the picture for him. And that was Jack Warner, head of the studio system. That was a real problem, the trouble I had with him. We had a lot of problems on that picture. First of all, Haskell Wexler was supposed to shoot it and he left the picture two weeks before shooting to do another picture. And the look is quite different from what I had planned. I had to use a studio cameraman. So it's a different look and then Jack Warner didn't understand the picture. He thought we were making a *James Bond* picture. And so he wanted more action. And this was not an action picture. So he took it and re-cut it. And then we had to fight to get it back and had to cut it again and couldn't get it the way it was the first time because they had lost a lot of footage. They had cut the negative. So it's not exactly the way the picture was meant to be, but it's close enough I guess.

And what about the Bond movie — Never say Never Again*?*
Well, Sean Connery asked me to do that movie. It was going to be the last Bond picture he would do. He hadn't done one for ten years and it was a remake of the last Bond picture he made, *Thunderball*. So we had a lot of problems getting a script. We had to use the book, not make it like *Thunderball* and yet make an exciting picture. And the book was not very good. It was not Fleming's best book. So we had to make things up and every time we made

things up, we would get a call from the other company, Broccoli's company, and they'd sue us, so we would end up in the courts in England every day of shooting practically. We had to use things from the book but nothing that the other film used from the book, so it was annoying. It was very hard. The biggest thing I wanted to do was not make the bad guy, the antagonist, a crazy character. I wanted to make him a business man. He was very greedy. You can say he's crazy or you can say he's not crazy. I don't think he is, I think he's just a greedy business man.

That's a cool idea, and he's different from the classic Bond villain.
Yeah, because in a Bond picture, the antagonist usually is the most important person other than Bond. But here, we couldn't make the classic Bond picture, because Sean was also much older and he couldn't do the same action scenes a young man would do, hanging by a rope, hanging from a cliff... I didn't want that. So I wanted to make something different from the older pictures because Sean was not exactly an old man but he was certainly older than he was before. So we thought of stuff he would be able to do and he wouldn't look ridiculous doing. I couldn't go for the action, which would have been the most obvious approach, because it would have looked silly with him doing it. I went more for a little bit of humour, like when he is with Barbara Carrera and they are trying to kill him and he's making love to her in the bottom of the boat. You know, things like that. We tried to use the underwater stuff in a better way. It was a very tough picture to make because of the Broccoli organisation. They said "You can't do that, you can't do this," and it was very hard to work like that. They certainly made us do it the very hard way.

But you had a great cast, though.
Oh, well, I made the cast, you know... And the cast is what's important. Oh yeah, I think Max Von Sydow is great and Sean is great and Barbara Carrera is great. And I also had some other wonderful British actors. And that was my big contribution, the most important thing, getting the right cast. Like Edward Fox, he was just wonderful, wonderful.

And Klaus Maria Brandauer, too.
Oh, he's a great, great actor. Not easy, but wonderful. Really good.

You directed an episode of Amazing Stories *and the* SeaQuest *pilot for Steven Spielberg.*

I've known Steven for years and I did the pilot for the series. I know them all: Lucas, Coppola and the rest of them. But I'm not part of their generation. In those terms, I think of myself as a loner, so I like to keep the distance.

IRVIN KIRSNER FILMOGRAPHY

as director, unless noted

1993
SeaQuest DSV (tv series)

1990
RoboCop 2

1988
The Last Temptation of Christ (actor)

1983
Never Say Never Again

1980
Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back

1978
The Eyes of Laura Mars

1977
Raid on Entebbe

1976
The Return of a Man Called Horse

1974
S*P*Y*S

1972
Up the Sandbox

1970
Loving

1966
A Fine Madness

1964
The Luck of Ginger Coffey

1963
Face in the Rain

1959
The Young Captives

1958
Stakeout on Dope Street

HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS

WITHOUT HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS the horror genre wouldn't be what it is today: movies like *Two Thousand Maniacs!* and *Blood Feast* changed film history forever. Yes, money and promotion were never far from his mind when he made these, but Lewis is a businessman who's written over a dozen books about marketing. Besides, some of the greatest movies ever made were shot with the same attitude. Orson Welles wasn't thinking about the value of his work when he directed *Citizen Kane*, he just wanted to make a good movie; perhaps a great one, but you can be pretty sure he wasn't thinking: "I'm gonna make history." Well, Mr Lewis is not exactly Mr Welles, but they don't call him "the godfather of gore" for nothing. He knew how to make them, and he knew how to make them right; that's why some of his films are classics today.

Almost four decades after the making of *Blood Feast* and *Two Thousand Maniacs!*, Lewis is still an icon, and the making of *Blood Feast 2: All You Can Eat* and *2001 Maniacs* can prove it. This was one of my first interviews and I really couldn't believe it was possible to get to talk to someone whose career I had been following for years. I would discover the world was not as big as it once seemed.

NICANOR LORETI *What inspired you to become a film director?*

H. G LEWIS Well, I had bought part of the share of a film studio. They made commerical features and institutional films. The first time I decided to make a movie I hired a film director. His work ended up being so mediocre that finally I decided to direct the next one myself and get it over with.

You're usually involved in all instances of the creative process of your films. You're often the director, director of photography, composer. Why?
I love to be in control of my own movies. Part of my frustration about *Blood Feast 2* was the fact that I couldn't move the camera as fast as I wanted. I even made some changes in the script because of that.

Which directors would you say influenced your work the most?
Uhhh, that one's almost impossible to answer. The director is, or should be, always invisible. Until I started making my own movies, I never had any interest in who could be the director. But whoever it is that directed *The Wicker Man* has my eternal admiration.

His name was Robin Hardy. Why do you admire that film so much?
In my opinion it's a masterpiece that manages to create a horror atmosphere without resorting to optical tricks.

When you shot Blood Feast*, did you think it would change filmmaking the way it did?*
I knew we were doing something completely new, but I never anticipated the level of importance that little film would have in time.

Is it true that you don't own the rights to any of your movies anymore?
I used my share of the actions in some movies as a collateral for an investment. It ended up being a complete fiasco, and the bank ended up taking the movies instead of money. I thought I had done the right thing, but time and history proved me wrong.

What drove you to come back in the new century with Blood Feast 2 *and* 2001 Maniacs*? Everyone was waiting for you to come back.*
For a long period of years, people in the industry had been talking about making a sequel to *Blood Feast.* Then Jackie Morgan came up with a good deal to shoot it. Surprisingly, I said yes. But *2001 Maniacs*... I have nothing to do with the guys that are making it, whoever they are.

How did you meet David F. Friedman and how did you become partners?

The three "L's" — Lovin', Likker and Lawbreakin'.
This Stuff'll Kill Ya! [1971], one of H.G. Lewis' later pictures, was a hillbilly, Bible thumping moonshine story, with some Old Testament style retribution.

Dave Friedman uused to work for a distributor in Chicago who was handling the distribution of my first two films. We both got stuck, that's how we decided to work together in the first place.

How did you get John Waters to do a cameo in Blood Feast 2*? Did you have it in mind when the project started?*
John is an old and great friend. He invited me to a horror movie festival in Baltimore a few years ago. When I accepted I told him: "Now, you owe me a favour." And he paid me by coming to New Orleans to make that cameo in *Blood Feast 2*.

Which of your movies do you like the most and which do you think is the worst?
Without a doubt, *Two Thousand Maniacs!* is the best and *The Gruesome Twosome* is the worst. However, some people do not agree with me at all.

Why do you think that one is the worst?
The guy who did the continuity and was in charge of the length of the movie miscalculated. So we had to fill it up with fat.

Your partnership with Dave Friedman ended after the making of Color Me Blood Red. *Why did that happen?*
We just followed our own way and went into different directions. He moved to California and started making erotic films. I stayed with the blood and the guts, with some exceptions like *Jimmy, The Boy Wonder* and *Year of the Yahoo*.

How did you get Tim Holt, who worked in The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, to play a part in* This Stuff'll Kill Ya*?*
At the time, Tim Holt was a salesman at a radio station in Oklahoma city, where we shot the movie. What a terrible fate for such a good actor! He was still 100% professional on the big screen.

How did you get the idea to make bloody movies? Did you think at one point: "No one has ever done it before so I'm gonna earn a lot of money"? I

think, in a way, porno movies and gore films have something in common: they always deliver the goods.
I think you're absolutely right in one of those topics. My intention was to make the kind of films no one had ever done before. However, I don't entirely agree with the porno movies comparison. In *Two Thousand Maniacs!* you have like twenty minutes until you see the first bloody effect.

How did you get the idea for the southern town in Two Thousand Maniacs!*? After a movie like* Blood Feast *that was like following a fist in the face with a hammer on the head...*
Well, what happened was that once we realised that some theatres would show those movies, I wanted to make a better film with a better script. Besides, that movie is not as bloody and exagerated as *Blood Feast*.

Don't you think horror movies these days lack originality? What do you think about The Blair Witch Project*?*
I think horror movies today are terribly formulaic. In my opinion, *The Blair Witch Project* is a triumph of promotion and a dramatic disaster. The whole movie is obvious, it's amateurishly shot and it doesn't have any effect to make it better than others.

Do you agree with the idea that the future of horror is in the hands of independent filmmakers rather than the studios?
I think there's enough room in the world for both. I never had the luxury of having a studio back up one of my movies, but obviously that backing has its pros and cons.

So you would make a movie for a big studio if they asked you to and offered you a good deal?
Of course, I wouldn't think about it for a minute. Wouldn't you?

What have you been doing for all these years?
Well, I kept on working in publicity and marketing. I always had at least one foot in that business, where I'm very well known and I have a much better

reputation than in the world of filmmaking. I wrote more than twenty six books on the subject and I write columns for six different magazines.

How would you like people to remember you? As an artist?
I think calling myself an artist would be too narcissistic. I'm much more comfortable with the term innovator.

H. G. LEWIS FILMOGRAPHY

as director

2002
Blood Feast 2: All U Can Eat

1972
Black Love
The Gore Gore Girls

1971
This Stuff'll Kill Ya!
Year of the Yahoo

1970
The Wizard of Gore
Miss Nymphet's Zap-In

1968
She-Devils on Wheels
Suburban Roulette
Something Weird
Just for the Hell of It
How to Make a Doll
The Psychic

1967
A Taste of Blood
The Gruesome Twosome
The Girl, the Body, and the Pill
The Magic Land of Mother Goose
Blast-Off Girls

1966
Jimmy, the Boy Wonder
Alley Tramp

1965
Monster A Go-Go

1964
Two Thousand Maniacs!
Moonshine Mountain

1963
Boin-n-g
Goldilocks and the Three Bares
Bell, Bare and Beautiful
Scum of the Earth

1962
Nature's Playmates
Daughter of the Sun

1961
The Adventures of Lucky Pierre

1960
The Prime Time
Living Venus

MAGGIE MOOR & RICHARD STANLEY

IN APRIL 2007, ONE of my interviewing dreams came true. For years I had been a fan of director Richard Stanley's two films, *Hardware* and *Dust Devil*. For me, he was one of the most original, groundbreaking and visually impressive horror filmmakers of our time. Sadly, after being removed from the director's chair of the ill-fated *The Island of Dr. Moureau* (starring Val Kilmer and Marlon Brando), Richard disappeared from the face of the earth. That year, having been amazed by the uncut DVD of *Dust Devil*, which also included three documentaries by Richard (*Voice of the Moon*, *The Secret Glory* and *The White Darkness*), I decided to track down Richard and try to get an interview with him. To my surprise, I found out he was about to shoot a new film, had co-written a movie with Nacho *Aftermath* Cerda (*The Abandoned*) and had made several short films with his girl Maggie Moor.

I was especially impressed with the short *The Sea of Perdition*, and discovered that Ms Moor was no mean talent herself. What I reproduce here is a chat with Richard and Maggie. For the record, *Dust Devil* is one of my favourite films, a masterpiece that deserves to be watched over and over. It's up there with *Suspiria*: Every second of it is amazing.

NICANOR LORETI *How did you first meet and how did the idea of collaborating on films come about?*

MAGGIE MOOR Richard and I had quite a tangled meeting as many elements contributed to the work we have done together. We were thrown

together, or at least into getting to know each other better, because of 9/11. Hands down. I was living here in New York and was invited to attend Oldenburg Film Festival with a project I had worked on involving Ben Gazzara, who was also in attendance at the festival, entitled *Blue Moon*. Richard was a featured filmmaker at the festival. They did a retro on all of his prior work, accenting *Secret Glory* as one of the highlights. I was impressed at the obvious intellect and honest interest he had in the subjects he had chosen for his documentaries. His choices of studies and also obvious worldly scope rang true and similar to mine, which was refreshing for me to find in a world of cinema and propaganda that is so often intent on making sales and fitting into the mass mainstream, instead of excavating one's real interests and putting oneself on the line. I admired Richard's courage as a filmmaker and writer. I felt we saw eye to eye artistically and spiritually. Interestingly enough, the thing that spurred me to walk up to him and introduce myself was the soundtrack to his film *Dust Devil*, which was composed by Simon Boswell. I was so moved by the choice of music I was compelled to comment and see if I could get a copy.

RICHARD STANLEY You could say our eyes met across a crowded room. There seemed to be something familiar about her as if I had seen her in a movie or on television. A nagging sense it had all happened already like a half remembered dream. I tried to ignore her but then she stole my hat and I had to chase her down.

MAGGIE On the final night of the festival Richard, myself and a few other filmmakers sat up talking cinema until the wee hours of the morning. My flight was scheduled to leave the afternoon of the eleventh; I made it as far as Frankfurt Airport and was stuck there watching live footage of the Twin Towers falling to the ground. Freaked out and unable to get anywhere near my family, I flew back to Oldenburg to wait for the next flight home. I had little money and didn't know when I would get out of the hotel, which was charging full rates and high prices on telephone bills. I ended up cutting my hair off and flying up to London to stay with Richard until I could get home safely.

RICHARD When I realised Bush had taken to the bunker and we were on the verge of World War III the whole mess started to make sense. In any case Frankfurt with all its air bases was no place to be in the event of a nuclear

strike. At first I thought I was trapped in that Chris Marker movie, *La Jetée*, and of course Maggie was the girl in the transit lounge. If I was gonna die with anyone I figured it might as well be her.

MAGGIE I must say, being stuck in Europe, especially at Richard's place during the 9/11 attacks, was quite a learning experience, as the European media coverage was a lot more balanced. Of course Richard had actually travelled all over Afghanistan when he shot his documentary *Voice of the Moon*, so for me the inside view of Al'Qaeda was very helpful in trying to wrap my mind around what had happened.

RICHARD I had wasted a lot of breath trying to alert the media to the situation in Afghanistan, especially after the death of my friend Carlos Mavroleon following the so-called 'wag the dog' attack on the first day of Monica Lewinsky's testimony in 1998.

I believe Carlos, like Ahmed Shah Massoud, Abdul Haq and his brother Abdul Qadir, were victims of what Hillary Clinton dubbed "a massive right wing conspiracy." Of course no one believed me or wanted to hear but Carlos was my buddy and there was no way I could just let it lie. Maggie was the first person to listen to me and after we realised the house was under surveillance she contacted CIA headquarters in Langley and encouraged me to take a more hands-on approach, acting as a go-between with the intelligence services who had taken an interest in some of the maps I had made back in the day, mostly aerial navigation charts modified by hand after close, ground level observation of the terrain. I felt vindicated by the faith she placed in me. I only wish we had been able to do more.

MAGGIE During that time Richard and I collaborated on several ideas for stories involving this premise and others for possible scripts. We also realised we had many common interests and tastes in music, literature, films, social and political viewpoints, and how we like to live our lives as artists. We realised we could work well together and decided to give it a go, modelling some type of movement after [John] Cassavetes and [Gena] Rowlands, but with our own style.

Tell us about your collaboration with Dario Argento for Simon Boswell's album. What was the experience like?

RICHARD Dario is my mentor and patron saint, always has been, even if some of his later work has been off beam. And Simon has been so selfless in his labours, particularly on *Dust Devil* and *Voice of the Moon*, that I was keen to return the favour any way I could. Besides, the thought of Dario doing a rap was irresistible.

MAGGIE Richard asked me to go to Rome and of course I concurred! Rome has this unique style to it, where everything looks like a film set. Hallways, stairwells, elevators, windows, basements, balconies, everywhere you look you have been given a beautiful place to photograph or film. I laughed there, because it was the only place I have ever enjoyed watching television, even that looked and sounded beautiful and inspired me to create. Dario was of course lovely, quite sprightly and funny. And I must say proudly I was able to scare him at one point. I am sure Richard can tell you the story better...

RICHARD Dario's brother, Claudio, helped us so that by the time he arrived we had been able to light his office as if it were something out of *Suspiria*. Maggie wore a black, mourning dress and very red lipstick. When she touched Dario on the arm and he turned to see her standing behind him he nearly jumped out of his skin! Goes to show even old ghouls like us can get the creeps.

How did you get the idea for your short film The Sea of Perdition*?*

RICHARD I got tired of being told you can't do sci fi horror on a budget. We thought if we could shoot a home movie on Mars for less than £3,000 someone might take notice and allow us to shoot something longer, failing that we could always add to it episode by episode and slowly bring it up to feature length, hence the serial format.

I wanted it to look like the colour supplement from an old Warren comic. Something with psychedelic colours, some sexual content and a low rent trip sequence that devolves into a silly Uncle Creepy style gag. Heh heh! Going to Mars is naughty, impolite and bad for your skin and poor Maggie does end up looking a little green about the gills. The real life Sea of Perdition is an arid dustbowl at the base of Mount Olympus in Cydonia and the name haunted me. For some reason they seem to have named a lot of Martian topography after the classical afterlife, the Fields of Elysium for instance which is apparently a frozen lake the size of the North Sea!

What was it like to shoot in Iceland and why did you choose to shoot there?

MAGGIE *Perdition* was a fly by the seat of our pants affair, at least for me. I know Richard had wanted to do a Mars thing for a while, and I had wanted to do a pulp style sci fi so when we were asked to do the Johann Johannsson video in Iceland it seemed a perfect opportunity. When I arrived at the production house and realised that we had to wait around for other filmmakers to shoot their footage at the same time and were pooled in having to share production people I said: "No way, the only way I am sticking around for this is if we rent a car, take this fabulous space costume, myself, and Richard and drive to the north eastern side of Iceland where NASA trained Apollo 12 in the late sixties." So we did and it was the best move we could have made. Yes, it was freezing, we barely ate, the space helmet fogged up every five minutes, the camera lens was always covered in mist, but it was the most amazing terrain I have come across yet. The final day of shooting at Myat Van hot spring made up for all of it. At least for me because I got to swim in it for hours while we shot gorilla style so the patrons wouldn't notice. Richard's amazing sense of colour, texture and lighting really came into play on *Sea*. I am fully impressed by his ability to create such classic and tasteful images surrounding such a gritty sci fi premise.

RICHARD Of course I had a hidden agenda, chasing down some of the references in the travel journals of Otto Rahn, the Nazi Grail historian who visited the area with the SS in 1936. We risked our necks shooting in a volcanic vent at Mount Kufla, just inside the Arctic Circle on the Greenland Ocean, effectively a sort of antechamber to the hollow earth. Of course they do tell people those things don't exist but the carvings and pictograms visible on the cave walls at higher resolution are completely real. Hyperborean crypto-archaeology, strongly reminiscent of the work of Clark Ashton Smith.

The sheer cheek of shooting in one lost world and pretending it was another appealed to me. Besides, at around -7°, conditions were in fact pretty similar to what you'd find on Mars, give or take the oxygen/nitrogen balance.

Have you ever been to Argentina? You should check out a place called Valle de la Luna.

MAGGIE I personally have not been to Argentina and would love to shoot something there. Valle de la Luna — *hmm* — sounds good. *Tango on Mars* anyone? I have an obsession with dance and music forms around the world.
RICHARD Have camera. Will work for food. Don't suppose you've got any adventurous producers interested in backing low rent sci fi horror down there? They're sure hard enough to come by in the outside world. My friend Karim Hussein was in your neck of the woods recently and said he had a blast.

The short film Black Tulips *shows you want to tell stories above all else, regardless of budget. Do you have plans to do any more shorts like this?*
RICHARD *Black Tulips* was never really intended for public consumption. It was more of an experiment in improvisation, shot entirely without script or prior planning in a twenty four hour period. A seedy glimpse behind the scenes, a typical day in Richard and Maggie's life, a paean to our process. Dogma werewolf or just plain dog, who knows? It had been a rough week and *Black Tulips* was what we had instead of an argument. Still waiting for the damn bulbs to sprout.
MAGGIE *Black Tulips* was thrown together script-wise. In 20/20 hindsight of course I know we could have put together a more legible story, but we got caught up in creating a film based on duplicity. An actor becomes another person for the role. A director creates a character they want to come alive for them and then gets an actor to do that. People want another person to be present in their life other than the person who is right in front of them so they project that person onto the one they have. People want to survive so they go on trying to take what they can and kill what they can't (metaphorically and really — take 9/11, for example, or the jungle). Magic, putting spells on people, all plays into this and we wanted to show that parallel of transforming oneself through magic and transforming oneself through the technique of acting. So the character Maggie becomes Katie who becomes a werewolf. We also wanted to get out the idea of freeing the child, girl, woman, animal in us all and tearing down the things that bind us from holding back our highest power and freest spirit. Thus she kills her husband and her old staid life. Rebirth, thus the title *Black Tulips* — and the line "I planted black tulips; they'll be up in the springtime." It's a lot to put into a short film, especially unscripted.

I love the end though and as Richard touts — it's the only werewolf movie where the actor changes into a wolf with absolutely no special effects. Yes, I am just insane for playing animals and making strange beastly sounds — much more fun than Colgate commercials.

RICHARD Perhaps we'll finish the beast some day, now that people have gotten a glimpse of the merry mayhem it entails. It probably wouldn't have seen the light of day if Maggie's website designer hadn't stripped a gear and posted it on YouTube without telling us but I can't help feeling encouraged by the response. 'Son of Black Tulips' anyone?

What's the status of Vacation*?*

RICHARD *Vacation* is a low budget sci fi horror epic that looks set to be the first feature project to come my way since *Dust Devil* [*Vacation* is still in preproduction 2010]. We're still trying to scare up the remaining funds but the budget is so ludicrously small we can guarantee the backers a return on their investment regardless of the actual content; small enough to fly under the radar basically. Hopefully it'll be the one that breaks the logjam and get my career back on track but if not I'll at least go down swinging my fists. It's based on an original screenplay written by myself and Ms Moor during our time in the Middle East and will probably put a few noses out of joint. The British Film Council claimed it was the single most offensive screenplay they had ever laid eyes on and believe me those guys read a lot! With Bruce Campbell in the frame it's now set to go before the cameras in October. Should be pretty much in the can by Halloween — *inshallah*.

What's it like working with Maggie as an actress and co-writer?

RICHARD Hey, Godard said all you need to make a movie is a girl and a gun. I already had the guns but needed a star. Maggie's the bona fide article, shining so bright she needs a bigger screen than YouTube to contain her. Of course she's an incredibly intuitive actor (you'd have to be, working inside a spacesuit at sub-zero temperatures) and absolutely fearless, my match blow for blow and line for line, the first collaborator I've been able to actually collaborate with as an equal since Michael Herr and Walon Greene on *Moreau*. Writing is an incredibly lonely, often painful business that I never believed could be shared in this way but a movie is more than just a script. To

be able to bounce off each other and play through the material is invaluable, to produce a document that is dramatically cogent, a blueprint for action rather than a static work of literature. l.

Maggie, when did you decide you wanted to be an actress and why?
MAGGIE The very first profession I remember wanting to be involved in was metalsmithing, I wanted to make horse shoes, metal broaches, and jewellery when I was pre-five years old. A few years later I decided I wanted to be a singer/dancer which turned into wanting to be a lounge singer. The dramatic acting idea always lingered in the background as going hand in hand with lounge singing, though I always loathed the thought of carrying a picture of myself in my bag and handing it to people in Manhattan in order to get work, which seemed odd for a goal in my adult life. But the love for text and stage drama kicked in full throttle mid high school. At that point I was already making and selling my jewellery, and singing in a band and in select state choirs.

What's it like working with Richard as a director and as a writer?
MAGGIE Richard is a very gifted director. He keeps his crew and cast happy, comes prepared and with great ideas and works around the clock. As a collaborative director he is someone I trust very much. I can be sure that if I have an image in mind that I want to shoot, he will know how to get it, no matter if there are circus elephants, impossible locations, or just dramatic story telling involved. He comes up with interesting ideas on the spot and is inspired by mine as well. He and I get along quite well in a creative environment. He is a good leader and motivator for the crew.

You starred in Twisted Sister's last video. Are you a fan of eighties music? What was the experience of working with Dee like?
MAGGIE Yes, I did star in Twisted Sister's first video in fifteen years and only their second video starring a woman. The director called me five days before the shoot and asked me to do it. Dee had the idea of the couple, the female emulating the role of Michael Metcalfe in the original We're Not Gonna Take It video adding also the idea of 'the TS guitar pick' at the end. The director emailed me some dialogue ideas, I sent him some of mine, and

thus we wrote the initial scene. Then I had the idea that I would get wild and take my hair down (actually I wanted to transform into a Christmas Elf but it didn't fly with the boys), I put my costume together, myself, did my own hair and makeup, and we shot the thing. Dee was a blast to work with. He has a ton of energy (he is practically a spokesperson for Starbucks, seriously, he admits it). He has spontaneous ideas, jumps all over the place, goes wild, gets everyone else pumped up, then takes off his makeup, ties his hair into a ponytail and goes back to the suburbs with his wife and kids. The band is really mellow and respectful. It was a great experience and a lot of fun. We shot the whole thing in five hours, the dance with the candy cane was totally spontaneous, my main intention was to get the super eighties hair flip shot into it. We were all psyched that it went to number one on VH1 Classics, Yahoo and YouTube videos within the first month. It was also featured on *The Jay Leno Show*. I always wanted to be the girl in the Whitesnake video when I was a kid so — hey — I gave it my best shot.

Tell us about your background

MAGGIE My great-grandparents were a song and dance team in Vaudeville. They moved out to Coney Island after the stock market crash instead of going to Hollywood. So much for nepotism to help me out but they were quite talented and famous in their time. He was Charlie Brown, she Mae Newman. She was a costume and jewellery designer, he a circus comedian, tap-dance king, turned Alaskan hotel owner after the Goldrush. When the hotel burned down, he moved back to New York and met Mae, formed a duo, went on the road and now I have lots of photos, articles, and my name, Maggie, to remember them by.

My mother was a lighting designer on the campus of Bard College. I have been in theatre since I was a child, modelling at eleven, assistant dance teacher through Junior and High school and studied Drama at ACT, William Esper and Stella Adler Conservatory for six years. I am currently working in studio with Michael Imperioli of *The Sopranos* here in New York.

You have a credit for additional dialogue in The Abandoned*? What contributions did you make to the screenplay exactly?*

MAGGIE Richard and I were asked by Nacho Cerda to arrive on set in Bulgaria during shooting and help with the script. I sat down for a few of the meetings as we hashed out storyline, character development, etc. I realised that three cooks in the kitchen this far into the project wasn't the most efficient and supportive way to work so I stepped out of those meetings and worked on the dialogue for the main characters once the direction of the scene was set. Especially the female, as she is American and I understand our turn of phrase and knew she was loosely based on my attitude from time to time as Richard often does that when working on anything that has an American female. So certain lines and affectations are sprinkled throughout the script that I contributed.

You co-starred with Burt Young in the stage play Stano. *Please tell us about that experience.*

MAGGIE Burt Young, well what can what I say? He is Burt Young and always will be. His initial question after meeting me, before the reading, was: "Hey there Maggie, say, you want to go to that gin joint across the street with me?" I most obligingly declined but said: "Thank you so much for using that word, I don't think I've ever heard it out loud and love the turn of phrase 'gin joint'! Thank you for that, seriously!" I did allow him to take me to the deli for a pack of gum instead, which I then offered to one of the members of Twisted Sister, who was in the audience Burt Young is a legend and a very talented man. He carried on the old school. He has to; the new one is never going to be as romantic as the nostalgic cinema of the seventies in New York. John Avildsen was also in the audience, he and I have maintained a friendship since as he was quite supportive and complimentary of my interpretation of the lead female during that reading

Was it challenging playing the role you had in Black Sunday *[directed by Frank Dauro]? It's based on a real person and a real situation, right?*

MAGGIE *Black Sunday* was a breath of fresh air — literally. The role I played was based on Diane Bellew, wife of NYFD firefighter John Bellew, killed in the tragedy coined Black Sunday. She is a stable, strong woman, going through a serious life struggle and grappling to be the best person she can be within all of it. She wasn't trying to be beautiful, sexy, involved with money, or power,

she is just a good woman going through life's battles and trying to come out on top. I prepared by reading a lot of newspaper and internet articles that were written about her and her family. She is a courageous, kind, strong willed, graceful, woman, and an honour to be allowed to portray on film.

Tell us about playing the lead in the sci fi musical Bettie.
MAGGIE That was fun and wacky. Great costumes, strange locations: mainly a cement making plant, I had never been on one or knew how cement was made until then. I read the book on Bettie Page , looked at her poses and personality, realised we had a similar overall style, so I stopped looking at the book and developed my own slant on the Bettie character. I got to record some vocal tracks in the studio that they used in the film which I loved. Three old jazz standards, and standards are my own personal fave to sing. That made my day. I did make one mistake prepping for this film, which was dying my hair jet black for it: wigs, ladies, go for the wigs — it's only going to be easier than stripping your hair later in the name of art.

Richard, why did it take so long for you to get back into shooting drama?
RICHARD We took a vacation. Besides I was in movie jail and had to throw a triple six to get out. I was scapegoated in the *Moreau* affair and exiled to the 'phantom zone' but we've been having a blast anyway, collecting happy endings.

Did the experiences you had shooting Voice of the Moon, The Secret Glory *and* The White Darkness *change the way you viewed life?*
RICHARD They didn't so much change my views as confirm them. The documentaries of course are just the tip of the experiential iceberg, tangible evidence of what I already suspected but could never quite convince my conscious mind. Footnotes from the quest. I don't think it's a filmmaker's place to comment on subjects he has no firsthand knowledge or insight into. How can you deal with love if you have never loved? Or hunger for that matter? Or killing? I have no interest in making films that merely comment on other films rather than reflecting some sort of reality or personal truth. Like that sped-up, step frame thing everyone's been using in action scenes since *Private Ryan*. The only time I ever see something like that in real life

is when I hit the fast forward on my DVD. Thank God. I wouldn't have lasted five minutes in combat otherwise. The real deal is quite the opposite — the moment seeming to slow down as the endorphins fill your bloodstream, calm and clear, lucid, every second fractally unfolding upon itself, giving you time to duck and cover, for the training to kick in. Peckinpah knew that, and so did Klimov. You want to know what the D-Day landings were like, go see *The Big Red One*. Sam Fuller only had a fraction of Spielberg's budget but he was there to see the real thing, he's not pulling that stuff out of his head. Real life is more terrifying than anything we can easily imagine or understand. Laurence Olivier playing a Nazi is still only an actor pretending to be a war criminal. A real life Nazi is a war criminal pretending to be an innocent civilian, a far more complex proposition yet still a performance of sorts. Regular people are better actors than they think, far better at playing themselves than any seasoned pro, always in character and perfectly dressed for their parts, their dialogue unscripted and unrehearsed and the whole thing unfolds in just one continuous take! A remarkable achievement when you get right down to it.

I hope and pray what we've been through these last many years informs the work. What little I learned about voodoo is still enough to come in handy when dealing with actors although it's what you might call 'results direction.' As you see from *Black Tulips* it certainly came in handy when dealing with Ms Moor!

What was it like collaborating with Karim Hussain and Nacho Cerda on The Abandoned *screenplay?*

RICHARD Sadly I didn't get to work with Karim as I only became involved with *Los Abandonados* during the shooting and postproduction period at which point Karim was already tied up with his own project, *La Belle Bette*, which is a masterpiece by the way, plainly his best work to date. Karim's original screenplay, *The Bleeding Compass*, was translated into Spanish and reworked by Nacho who moved the setting from backwoods Quebec to somewhere in the Ukraine. It was then translated back into English and pretty much every second scene was torn out by the line producer before shooting finally commenced in Bulgaria under the title *Bloodline*. By this stage a British actress had been cast in the 'American' lead, a Yugoslavian actor was playing her father and a Czech was supposed to be her Russian twin

brother. Quite a family, I'm sure you'll agree! Nacho and his Spanish DP, Xavi Jimenez, did a helluva job bringing it in on schedule but further mishaps such as the floods that washed out the bridge built for the final sequence tore more holes in the structure than anyone could keep track of.

So they called me in. It was a messy job but somebody had to do it and Nacho is my friend. Myself and Ms Moor booked into a suite at the Sofia Hilton and set about rewriting the beast from scratch, working closely with Nacho and the editor throughout the postproduction period, looping ADR lines and creating the frame story that gave the film its release title, appending a logic to the visuals.

The best part was having to train up the pigs to attack Nikolai. His character was based on one of our former associates, so I guess there was a double agenda at work. I'll never forget those hot, lazy Eastern Bloc afternoons, taking the four-wheel drive up to the barn to throw old prosthetics stuffed with raw meat into the pens where they kept the hogs before lying up in the rafters with Ms Moor to watch 'em feed, knowing they were becoming very efficient maneaters. It was a filthy business but somebody had to do it. Those critters may not be much to look at but they had some weight on 'em.

Did getting the Dust Devil *director's cut out on DVD help exorcise some of your demons?*

RICHARD Hell, no. What would I want to do that for? I'm on good terms with my daemons. Last thing I'd want to do is exorcise them! It's been a long time coming and the public response after all these years has been very gratifying. They say that once in every generation a plague shall fall upon us and I can't help feeling that perhaps the dude's time has finally come. He can smell a soul, a town or a whole damn country waiting to die from half a world away, and considering the reception he's been getting stateside I can't help feeling a little worried. *Dust Devil* certainly helped get his image out there, helped define his mythos and ten years on its influences run deep.

Don Coscarelli, one of my heroes, told me he had cut *Bubba Ho-Tep* together using Simon's *Dust Devil* score as a temp track and you can see the dude's mark in works as diverse as Nick Cave's Aussie western *The Proposition* and the opening minutes of *Ghost Rider* — which reiterates the lore and draws a nice little link with Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the*

West, the original jumping-off point for myself and the Nephilim who were largely responsible for cross-pollinating that spaghetti western imagery with emergent goth culture back in the eighties. No Nephs, no Richard, no *Dust Devil* — and Keanu Reeves might not have been wearing that long black coat in *The Matrix*, Van Helsing definitely wouldn't have had that stupid hair, and those psychotic kids who opened up on their classmates at Columbine would probably have been wearing bowler hats instead of trenchcoats. But there you go. Too damn late to put the genie back in the bottle now...

What can we expect to see in your long awaited project The Bones of the Earth *and can you tell us anything about the casting?*

RICHARD *Bones* is an epic alright, the finest screenplay I've ever worked on and may well end up being the one that finally puts me in my grave and then kicks the dirt in after me. I mean it's a monster! A great, white whale of a movie, as big as *Moreau* and twice as dangerous. It hasn't even gone into production yet and it's already trailing a body count. It began with a treatment written by Donald Cammell, the last thing he worked on before he shot himself. One of my associates is Nic Roeg's son Luc, and I literally came across the draft lying on a shelf in his office. Donald's name and the dateline drew me in at once and it's been keeping me on my toes ever since. I initially tried to set it up with Richard Harris who I really believed was going to win an Oscar for the damn thing, least he might have done if he hadn't popped his clogs after playing Dumbledore in *Harry Potter* instead. After Richard's demise the project went into turnaround as we tried to fill his king sized Gaelic shoes. No mean feat, if you'll pardon the pun but it looks like it's finally moving although I can't give you any names yet, subject to contract. Owing to the sheer, stupid size of the beast and the inordinate technical challenges it represents I can't see it going before next year. I only hope I stay alive to see it through but even in a worst case scenario it's moving with sufficient momentum to survive without me.

What's it about?

RICHARD The title *The Bones of the Earth* refers to a ring of standing stones in western Scotland associated with the Queen of Winter, the folkloric Dark Lady, grandmother of the clans and guardian of the wild herd. No hunter

may slay a stag without her warrant and an offering or libation is made each year on the eleventh of September, coincidentally the first day of the Scottish hunting season, a mass slaughter that has come to be known as the Highland Cull. The plot concerns a professional stalker on the verge of retirement who clashes with a ragtag band of hunt saboteurs only to find himself drawn into a deeper, more deadly conflict when one of their number turns out to be a psychotic veteran of the war in Afghanistan, a brain damaged master survivalist determined to exact a terrible revenge on the stalker's millionaire clients whom he holds responsible for both his and the world's pain. The only thing standing between this primitive eco-warrior and the violent catharsis he seeks is a frail old man, a drink sodden vestige of an earlier, simpler epoch. Like *Moreau* the film deals with our place in the feeding chain, with the civilised world and the atavistic, pagan impulses that chafe against it, the raw and the cooked, man and beast and the beast in man. Like it or not a killer can be so much closer to the earth, closer to nature than a pacifist or a vegetarian simply because his soul is closer to an animal soul and his bonding with the beasts he hunts the stronger for it. I've lived in Britain for many years and wanted to address their culture, the death of the countryside and the passing of a certain way of life, lost honour and the sentimental illusion that it ever existed in the first place. The kind of thing Peckinpah was driving at in his later years but never found the project to fully express. Think *Ride the High Country* crossed with *The Osterman Weekend*. Think *Straw Dogs* meets *First Blood*. Think precision rifles, dogs, helicopters and fuel air weapons. Think of the Royal Family, the American President, the Highland Ball at Balmoral Castle and 20,000 tons of flesh melting nerve gas! Think *Bones*, the single most apocalyptic, out of order, just plain vicious British action thriller ever made, and pray I get the beast before a camera some time soon!

You try to stay away from commercials. Why?

RICHARD I believe we have to answer for our actions in this life and I, for one, have no desire to suck the devil's dick. And let's face it we're talking the real devil here, Rex Mundi, Mammon, the eye in the pyramid, the dark forces that would seek to subjugate our souls and rape the planet. I believe consensus reality is an illusion maintained by the holding pattern of the mass

media. My life is dedicated to exposing and subverting that illusion, not to helping maintain it. By misusing what limited talents we have we run the risk of losing them. My daemons would stop talking to me once and for all. Lord knows, they put up with enough already. To be honest I did knock off a Nintendo commercial a few years ago. Strictly a one-off. I only did it to prove I could and because I was allowed to have the aliens throw up on the pack shot. I sculpted the console out of thin polystyrene and mixed up the alien puke from nail polish remover. Worked a treat.

How do you avoid selling out after all these years?
RICHARD Like I said, I avoid commercials. Even just watching the things makes me sick. And I guess by now people have got me pegged as a non-conformist, never a good thing, employment wise. Like Mr Judd says in *Ride the High Country*: all that matters in the end, even if you end up broke and alone, is to be able to enter your own house justified, to know you've done everything you could, that you've given it your all.

Do you have any advice for people starting out in the film business?
RICHARD Don't do it. Not unless you have to. It will never make you happy or satisfy like a good meal or the love of a woman. Even if you succeed, even if you're a genius. Look at Peckinpah and Tarkovsky. Welles or Hitchcock. Do they look as if they were happy men to you? After completing his biggest film, *Kagemusha*, Akira Kurosawa shut himself in his hotel bathroom, looked himself in the mirror and then cut his own throat. He was a genius but he wouldn't have survived to make all those other classics if it hadn't been for the cleaning lady barging in when she did. There's no future for a filmmaker in this world, not the way it is. There's no pension, no retirement scheme, no golden watch. At a certain age you simply become unbondable. After that they take you out and shoot you like a horse. There's no get out clause or time off for good behaviour. No rest or mercy. No exceptions. But if you have to do it remember a film director is a general in charge of an army of traitors. Treat the cast and crew as if they are your friends but never start believing it! Every dog man one of them is there for their own personal reasons, to get laid, get rich, God only knows. So long as their desires and the needs of the project are in harmony all will be well but as soon as those things start to diverge

you're in trouble. The audience won't shell out for tickets or order the DVD because they like you or because you say your prayers at night. You may have fans and admirers but fuck up just once, crack a joke that isn't funny, serve up a half baked scene or a bunch of phoney performances and they will desert you faster than rats fleeing the proverbial ship. The director is the one who is responsible. After all, somebody has to be. Responsible for the health and safety of your crew, the money your producers have invested and the integrity of the project as a whole. Any personal message, any notions of 'art' must be secondary to that. Everything else is folly. Everything else is ego. Losing. Vanity. Remember John Landis' words at the *Twilight Zone* trial when asked by the judge to define his role — "the director is the one who gets the blame."

If you must do it then lead from the top, first on, last off, 24/7. Never ask anyone to do something you're not prepared to do or haven't already done yourself. Never ask a camera operator to jump out of an aeroplane unless you're ready to jump with him, never ask an actor to take off their clothes unless you're ready to get naked, never break bread with the biz unless you're prepared to go swimming with sharks.

And above all get a decent hat. Something with a wide enough brim to close out anyone you don't have time to speak to without hurting their feelings and to shield you from all the shrapnel, broken glass and blazing shit that's gonna be flying your way.

Best of all it precludes the need to flounce about doing that stupid 'I am a viewfinder' thing with your hands. A decent brim gives you your first horizontal and it comes in a nice, widescreen ratio! Anyone with a good hat doesn't need justification…

RICHARD STANLEY FILMOGRAPHY

as writer, director, producer

2006
The Sea of Perdition

2003
Europe 99 Euro Films 2

2002
The White Darkness (documentary)

2001
The Secret Glory (documentary)

1996
The Island of Dr. Moureau (uncredited director, co-writer)

1994
Marillion: Brave

1992
Dust Devil

1990
Voice of the Moon (documentary)
Hardware

1987
Incident in an Expanding Universe

1983
Rites of Passage

MAGGIE MOOR FILMOGRAPHY

as actor

2006
Black Sunday
The Sea of Perdition (also writer)

2002
Spaceship
Ti amo
Passing By

DAN O'BANNON

DAN O'BANNON, WHO RECENTLY passed away from Crohn's disease, was one of the key players in the history of contemporary horror cinema. He's the man who wrote *Alien*, one of the most influential films of the last three decades. It spawned five sequels (if you count the *Aliens vs. Predator* movies), a comic book series and several spin offs and copycats. O'Bannon had a strange career, but always delivered original ideas, and occasionally these become impressive cult classics like *The Return of the Living Dead* and *Dark Star*. His collaboration with John Carpenter on the latter was the basis for *Alien* and a demented epic in its own right — one that could only have been conceived of during the seventies (I forgot to ask him about that, but I think they were smoking too much pot when they shot it to remember much anyway…).

Dan wrote stuff like *Blue Thunder*, directed by John Badham and starring Roy Scheider and Malcolm McDowell; the animated feature *Heavy Metal*; two Tobe Hooper films (*Lifeforce* and *Invaders from Mars*), and the Philip Dick adaptations *Screamers* (starring Peter Weller), and *Total Recall*, directed by Paul Verhoeven and starring future Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger. His contribution to modern cinema history is undeniable, as is his idea that getting a chick in her underwear to fight a horrible monster could be scary instead of sexy.

NICANOR LORETI *When did you decide you wanted to be a filmmaker?*
DAN O'BANNON Well, I've always loved movies, you know? I went to see films as a child every single day, since we didn't have television at the

time. I started to think about getting a job in the movie business when I was in college, when I had to figure out what I wanted to do for a living. So I found out about film school and I applied there. I met John Carpenter there, and he was about to do a science fiction project and asked me if I wanted to be involved. Through mutual enthusiasm the thing grew totally out of proportion and it was too big for the cinema department. They had no way to release it; there was no way to show it to anyone outside the university, so we had to struggle for it to see the light of day.

That project was Dark Star*, right?*
Yeah.

Tell me about that experience.
Well, Carpenter had the idea originally and we wrote it together. He put some of his ideas and I put in some of mine, it was really a mutual collaboration.

Whose idea was it to make it more comedic?
It happened as we were discussing. Comedy emerged, so we did it that way. What he had in mind originally was not exactly comedic; it was sharp and straightforward. I thought that doing a comedy would be a good idea, and we both started laughing. So we decided to do it like that.

And who decided to create the alien, which was really a giant beach ball with legs and arms?
Well, we both wanted to have an alien. We didn't appreciate how difficult it was to make it more real. And we went ahead and got an alien costume from a rental house. We managed to shoot some scenes with it, which were similar to the ones you see in the movie and it was just so bad we couldn't live with it. So we sat down and rethought the alien. We decided that without any kind of resources we probably couldn't do a realistic looking monster. Then, we decided that it should be more comedy orientated and that it should have its own personality. The way we actually decided that it would be that balloon, that beach ball, was by accident. One of the guys that was working with us, he had decided to make a fake planet for us. So he brought a beach ball and he inflated it, and then he wanted to add something to it, so it could rotate.

When he was finished with it, all we saw as this giant ball with what looked like arms and legs. And both of us laughed out loud. Then we decided to base our alien on that... I went to this magic shop in Hollywood and bought a couple of rubber arms and legs. And then we thought it would be cool to give the thing a voice. I'm pretty sure that the alien's voice was Lucas' inspiration for R2D2's squeaky voice in *Star Wars*. For the thing's voice, we brought in an air balloon, we let the air escape and we recorded it. And we recorded water bubbles coming out of that balloon too. Long after we had finished *Dark Star* I was still worried about making a realistic looking alien. I really wanted to. And part of that was in my mind when I conceptualised *Alien*.

I just wanted to ask you about that because there is an obvious conceptual similarity between both movies.
Well, in a way, *Alien* is a scary version of *Dark Star*. I started thinking about it while we were making *Dark Star*.

When you wrote Alien*, was it because a studio had approached you to do it?*
I wrote it on spec. And then I went around trying to sell it, it was not a work for hire. No one would have ever been allowed to write a script like that. I wrote it completely on spec and Carpenter didn't want anything to do with it, he bowed out and that was about it.

How did you get the idea to make the hero a woman? Because that was not exactly typical of the time.
Well, the truth was I was sitting down putting the story together in front of the computer and the studio didn't want the monster to be attacking too many women. And having pretty women as the main characters was a real cliché of horror movies and I wanted to stay away from that. So I made up the character of Ripley, whom I didn't know it was going to be a woman at the time. We're talking about the mid to late seventies here and feminism had become a big thing. So I was looking for some way to put some novelty into an old formula to make it fresh. So it occurred to me that I could have people from different genders without having any love story at all. I sent the people of the studios some notations of what I thought should happen and when

we were about to make the movie, the producer of the film jumped out on it. He just liked that idea and told me we should make that Ripley character a woman. I thought that if the captain would have been an old woman and Ripley a young man, that would have been interesting. But he said: "No, let's make the hero a woman." It didn't affect the dramatic tone of the story at all. It was an intriguing idea and it certainly paid off in terms of public interest of the film. I mean, a lot of people thought more about that than about the rest of the movie. And that was an idea that other people liked and developed into films of their own.

Did you expect the movie to become so influential?
No, never. Writing Alien, in the first place, when I was writing the screenplay, I thought it might be too esoteric to the public at large. And I was very gratified and more than a little surprised when everybody I showed the script felt very enthusiastic. Everybody liked it, and it surprised me a little bit. But when it got made and came out, the positive reception the film got still amazes me. I didn't expect it to be received that well. Every audience enjoyed it, the critics loved it and it made everybody want to imitate it. During the second month since the movie's opening, I was walking into a pharmacy and I came into a bunch of alien plastic toy figures. They were copies directly from Giger's design, and they were even articulated [laughs]. So I was astonished, and I thought about a long chain of connections. It started with me on my house in Hollywood writing the script of Alien and it ended up in the shelf of this store with the Alien action figure. An utterly inappropriate children's toy [laughs]. I can't think of anyone who'd want to buy it, no kid would ever want to buy that thing and no adult would buy it either. Next thing I see, the alien is standing next to Barbie, so what do I know, right? After the Star Wars toys sold so much, they would make action figures of almost every new movie there was. I don't think that Star Wars sold more toys than Aliens. And thank God for that!

I know what you mean…
Mostly, a horror story or a horror movie is a very fragile thing. When it's brand new, and it's something fresh, that you've never seen before, then it can have a full effect on people. But once you expose it to the light of day,

it very quickly loses its impact. And *Alien* has been so overexposed; I think it can never be fully effective ever again. There are movies that people can watch several times, like the *Godfather* series. *The Godfather* has not lost its value in all these years. I think that's the whole idea of a film like that, the fact that you can see it again and again. But differently, *Alien* or for that matter *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, they can not survive overexposure. They lose their ability to scare.

I think the movie hasn't aged, though. I've seen it several times and although it didn't scare me every time, I found new and interesting things every time I watched it.
Really? Well, that's good and it's extremely interesting. When you make a movie, you don't know how it's going to end up. Some of the old classics are still good and some are unbearable. I remember one movie... How old are you?

I'm twenty five.
Too young for this [laughs]. Well, I saw *The Graduate* when it came out, in 1968. And *The Graduate* was a really good movie, it really was. Everybody liked it and it was an enormous hit. It was so huge in 1968 that the producers decided to screen it again ten years later, in 1978. I went down and saw it when it opened again and it was a total embarrassment. Ten years had destroyed that film. The same happened to *Easy Rider*. So you just don't know. I'm very pleased that *Alien* can still hold its own. I mean, it shouldn't have, by all rights it was one of the most fragile things around, because you couldn't just tell what was going to happen in a few years. A few years passed and it totally rocked, right? I'm really, really happy that this one is holding its freshness. It's really weird. It was pure luck! An accident, a total accident [laughs]. Personally, at the time I thought the future was blank. I thought I would never make another movie. But now we know what happened, don't we?

And what do you think of the sequels? Do you like any of them?
Well, they are all quality films. Cameron's [*Aliens*] is the best of them, but the idea of sequelizing *Alien* goes against my principles. Because the

sequels also overexpose the original. They overexpose it and rework it. *Alien* should have never had sequels. A lot of horror movies have been sequelized a thousand times and they worked, right? But no, I recognise the quality of them but I think it was basically a bad idea to make sequels to *Alien*. But they don't make sequels anymore, now they remake movies that were hits two years ago [laughs]. Do you know this guy Michael Bay? I think it's time for one of the studios to finance Michael Bay's remake of *Titanic*.

Ha! That's a good one!
Hey! That was a hit like five years ago, right? And he usually does big movies.

They are also making Aliens vs. Predator.
You know what? Good for them. You see, I'm easily bored. I don't like to see the same thing over and over again.

One can see that in your work, because each of your films is very different to the others.
Well, it's a curse, you know? But you can see it. There are filmmakers that change every time and there are others that make the same movie over and over again. The ones that make the same film over and over again are usually happier people and get more work, because you know what to expect from them.

You wrote some segments of Heavy Metal*, right? How did you get the job and was it different to write an animated feature?*
Well, I wrote two and arguably three episodes of *Heavy Metal*. There's a short movie about a sports car back from a space shuttle. I did that when we were on preproduction of *Alien*. I was sitting in 20th Century Fox supervising the artists that were doing the design. I just sat there and did this one-page comic book. I didn't think about it, and one of the artists saw it and said that he would like to illustrate it for *Heavy Metal* magazine. Would I mind? I gave it to him and told him to do whatever he wanted with it. So he redid it and it looked gorgeous. Then the people from *Heavy Metal*, who were about to make the movie asked me to write an episode for them. So I wrote a short

treatment about a bomber in World War II, where aliens get on board and all these supernatural things start happening. They took that treatment and reworked it and then, in the middle of the film, there was this section that looked very much like *The Fifth Element*. It was set in the future with a cab driver. My connection to that was that I wrote a very elaborate set piece of a detective film noir set in the future for Jean Giraud, which he wanted to use in his magazine *Metal Hurlant*. They published it in France and then published it in America in the American edition, called *Heavy Metal*. And so when I read the first American edition, there was my comic book translated to English. When they wanted to make the movie, they decided to change the story enough so that the French could not say anything about it. So they used a cab driver in the future rather than a private eye, so I wrote two of the episodes of the film and was the inspiration for the third one. That was my contribution to that movie.

Do you like it nowadays?
Well, in some ways I do and in some ways I don't. Conceptually, it's really interesting material, full of good ideas; the animation techniques that were available back then were very limited. I think you could do *Heavy Metal* today as it deserves to be done. I think their ambitions were too great at the time, and you couldn't animate the way they do today then. That's it.

Tell me about your first directorial effort, Return of the Living Dead.
Well, three years later, Tobe Hooper asked me for a script he wanted to direct. He had some kind of complicated history of a screenplay leading back to Romero's Night of the Living Dead. And it basically had only a title. But they needed a story that was different enough from Romero and company. So I sat down with Tobe and we worked out a story, I wrote it up, everybody liked it and Tobe got offered a job directing a much more expensive movie. The producers, without knowing better, went on and asked me to direct it. But I had written it for Tobe Hooper, not for me. If I had known I was going to direct it, I would have written an entirely different screenplay. I also realised that if I told them I was going to throw away this screenplay, then I would be seeing the whole project crash. So I just went ahead and did it.

Did you have anything to do with the casting of the movie?
Oh yeah, I did. Thankfully. All but two of the actors I personally chose. And one of them ended up being great and the other one was truly disappointing. But with the first one I was thrilled. The guy I was thrilled with was Clu Gallagher... We couldn't get anybody to play that part, and the first day of shooting Clu Gallagher showed up on the set in makeup and I just went blank. I said, "Whatever, roll up," and he did really well. He became that character. He did that character even better than it deserved to be done, frankly. And the other actor I'm not going to specify was not even up to the standard. I was pretty happy with the rest of them mostly.

How did you get to cast Linnea Quigley as the naked punk rock zombie?
Why I chose her? Well, it was a low budget film. If you have a lot of money, then actors will do anything. If you don't have much money, they get picky [laughs]. The character was a nihilistic punk rocker. It had two requirements: she had to take her clothes off and be able to act. There was no shortage of actresses willing to take their clothes off, so we sat there by a long table and when the actresses came in we made them take their clothes off so we could see if their bodies were fairly acceptable. But none of them could act at all! So my criteria for casting that part ended up being the first person that walked through that door and could do it... that would be the one! Grab her [laughs]! I had pictured her more of a dark gothic girl, like Winona Ryder in *Beetlejuice*. There are a lot of good actors out there and there are an awful lot of young actors out there who haven't made it yet. Let me tell you one thing: it wasn't easy casting the bums in that movie. Because no one wants to cast a bum. And there were only three guys that did that kind of job, and they did it in every movie there was. I guess they must have died by now — I'm talking about the three guys that pushed the shopping cart. So they would go to every casting call to play the bums, and obviously they would get the part. And they were willing to look like filthy bums all of the time. So if you're going to hire some actor to play a bum, you'll have to hire one of the three guys that do it routinely, or you're going to need a lot of money to hire a real actor. What was that thing called, *Ironweed*?

The one with Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep? Yeah...

Oh, there's always that [laughs]. Actually, you know, if you're doing a low budget picture or a student film, it's so hard to find an actor who'll play a bum that the directors usually better off do it themselves. It's true, man! You pick up a SAG card, and grab a pack of trash! It sounds funny but it's not a joke.

You wrote two movies for Tobe Hooper, Invaders from Mars *and* Lifeforce. *How did you manage to update the concept from the original* Invaders from Mars [1953]*?*
Let me tell you, *Invaders from Mars* was a movie I very much enjoyed as a child. It had a lot of impact on me. I thought that I was going to direct that remake from *Invaders from Mars*. That was what the producers told me, that I could direct it if I wrote it. But after I was finished, they told me they had hired Tobe and I was really mad. I thought I was going to direct so simply recast it. I recast the film. My reasoning was very simple: the original film was very strongly cast, but I wouldn't make a remake. I would take the same basic story but would do it as an art film. Beginning with the nurse bringing the boy to the airbase to talk to the commanding officer. And then I would tell the story as a flashback, and during the whole story of the movie, which was the flashback, I originally wrote it from the point of view of the child. I intended when I directed it — which I didn't — to keep the camera down, at the child's level, at all time. I wanted people to be completely aware in this film that we were looking from the child's point of view. When they started to talk to Tobe about this, all my innovations went out the window, and they brought in another writer to push the script back to where it originally was. But it came out to be just a bad film. They cast good actors badly, so I'm not pleased with the way it came to be.

And what about Lifeforce*?*
Well, I worked hard on that. Don Jakoby and I wrote that. We adapted the original novel. I was expecting something very spectacular, because they spent a lot of money on that. We worked hard thinking we were writing an intelligent movie. Tobe didn't really change the script but, you know, a good line said badly becomes a bad line. And the disastrous move in that film was to cast, what's his name?

Steve Railsback.
That just torpedoed the whole thing. When we wrote the screenplay, we tried to be faithful to the author [Colin Wilson]. When he finally saw it, he called it the worst film he'd ever seen.

There are worse movies, come on…
Well, my immediate reaction was that he must not have been to film school [laughs]. But, anyway…

What's it like to work with other writers? You've worked with Don Jakoby on several occasions.
Well, the reason we did so many screenplays together on spec as well as for hire was that we discovered our writing talents were extremely complementary. I'll try to give you a simple idea what that means. It's very easy for me to sit down with a few pieces of paper and work out a story from the get go. I can put together a working storyline of about ten pages, but actually writing the script, that's a whole other thing. Sitting down and writing the complete thing is an agony, I hate it. The only reason I've written complete first drafts is to keep on doing something. But then Don comes along, we start talking. Don really doesn't have any patience to sit down and work on a storyline in advance. So he and I would talk about the idea until we were satisfied, and then I would write a ten page story putting the scenes into proper order. And then I would give it to him. And he would write a complete long draft, then we would work on it together. Parts of it would be really messy, but other parts were brilliant and wonderful, and in a short order he would have a first draft. He'd give it to me and I'd rewrite it. I would go through pages and pages I would leave untouched and then I would change complete things that were a mess. The process worked so well for the both of us that we really wrote, over several years, a large number of scripts together. Anyway, we're still friends. Don is a hell of a writer, he writes great stuff, I would never have done any scripts with him if he wasn't a really terrific writer. It was not just because he would do the dirty work.

I liked stuff of his like John Carpenter's Vampires.
Yeah, he showed me the script when he was writing it.

Was it different from the movie?
I haven't seen the movie.

No? Why?
By the time you get to my age, you become reluctant to experience pain if you don't have to. I haven't seen it, but I don't want to explain that. Next question.

You did two adaptations of Philip K. Dick stories, Total Recall *and* Screamers.
The highlight of my life [laughs].

Why?
Well, it was wonderful to work with material like Phil Dick's. In both cases, these were stories I didn't initially get the idea to adapt. Somebody came to me to write them. In the case of *Screamers*, the story was all there in the story. All I had to do was figure out how to transform some things from the page to the screen. But I didn't have to think about the story, it was all there. *Total Recall* was based on a short story that was very improper to adapt. That movie didn't end up being what I thought it would be, but in some ways it was still satisfactory to work on that. I love the way Phil Dick writes and I would never in a million years cut out any of his great twists and startling ideas. My work as a screenwriter was to find a way to justify those things. I've taken a whole amount of satisfaction seeing Phil Dick's stories being rolled over to screenwriters like a piece of… I don't know… Most of the time, they don't know what to do with it, so they write a simplified story. I didn't do that. In neither case did I do that. In both scripts I came recognisably clear and close enough to the real thing.

What do you think of the result in both cases?
Total Recall is basically good, with an ending that makes no sense whatsoever [laughs]. And the decision from the director to put in a big amount of unpleasant language I thought was a total mistake. It was meant to play at a semi comedic James Bond level. It's not a real science fiction movie. Lots of science fiction movies are not really sci fi in their core; lots of them are

dramas, or whatever. But that one had sci fi ideas all over the place. The other one had a somewhat lower budget; I think that when they shot it they did something rather odd. They kept most of the scenes and the action of it and the characters. But they took out a lot of the dialogue, which was a combination of me and Phil Dick. And a lot of the impact of the thing came from the dialogue.

Do you think it was a wise idea to cast Schwarzenegger for Total Recall*?*
The problem with that was that it was supposed to be a surprise when it turns out the hero was truly a secret agent. You have to think at first that he is some kind of office worker and then you discover that he really is James Bond. Well, cast Schwarzenegger and all that is gone, because he'll always be himself. He's a unique person. My ideal casting choice would have been Richard Dreyfuss. You know, they shot it in Mexico City and Verhoeven came down with the flu. Have you ever been to Mexico City?

No.
Lucky you! [laughs]. They were going to shoot *Return of the Living Dead* in Churubusco [a neighbourhood of Mexico City]. They even flew me down there. It would have been suicide.

What about The Resurrected*?*
Well, that was a good movie that was destroyed when they edited it. They took away everything that was good about it. Let me tell you, I shot a good movie, and look at what they did.

What was it like working with Chris Sarandon?
Oh, he's a complete genius. It was the best thing about doing that movie. He was just great, he's an amazing actor, you know? I wish they had done something good with it, but they didn't. They just shouldn't have messed with it. They should have stayed away.

DAN O' BANNON FILMOGRAPHY

as writer

2004
Alien vs. Predator (story, characters)

1997
Alien: Resurrection (characters)
Bleeders (screenplay)

1995
Screamers (screenplay)

1992
Alien³ (characters)
The Resurrected (director)

1990
Total Recall (screen story, screenplay)

1986
Invaders from Mars (screenplay)

1985
Lifeforce (screenplay)
The Return of the Living Dead (screenwriter, director)

1983
Blue Thunder (screenplay)

1981
Heavy Metal (segments: Soft Landing, B17, story)
Dead & Buried (screenplay)

1979
Alien (story, screenplay)

1977
Star Wars (computer automation and graphic displays)

1974
Dark Star (screenwriter, editor, actor)

ALBERT PYUN

IF YOU'VE SEEN *Nemesis*, *Dollman* or *The Sword and the Sorceress*, you've probably heard of Albert Pyun. If you've seen as many films as me, then you probably even LIKE them and think he's a good director. I always thought the guy was technically impressive, especially when I saw *Captain America*, where it is obvious there was absolutely NO budget whatsoever. Even in these trying circumstances, somhow Pyun always manages to be technically apt.

In my opinion his best movie to date is *Nemesis*, where the combination of great camerawork, a decent storyline, amazing action sequences and a strong supporting cast (including Tim Thomerson and *Blade Runner* veteran Brion James) made the film a winner. Born in Hawaii, Pyun has had one of the strangest careers in the independent action movie world — a world usually populated by empty films no one remembers a few years after they come out. Pyun's films always stick in my mind because, even if they're not always great, they're different, special. You can see this guy loves filmmaking, and when he delivers you get stuff like *Brain Smasher*, *Nemesis*, *Mean Guns* or *Radioactive Dreams*; B movies with a twist, with attitude, rather than the usual shelf-filling trash that goes straight to video every month. He's worked with a lot of great actors and future stars like John Stockwell, Tim Thomerson, Richard Lynch, Lance Henriksen and Kris Kristofferson. This guy's made watchable movies in three days, worked for Cannon and Full Moon, and has stories that should be heard by anyone interested in B movie history. While other directors sell out to the Hollywood mainstream, Pyun is out there with the resistance. I wouldn't say he's the cinematic equivalent of Che Guevara, but we're lucky to have him.

NICANOR LORETI *I heard you started working for Akira Kurosawa? How did this happen and what was the experience like?*
ALBERT PYUN When I was eighteen, I was invited to Japan by the great Japanese actor, Toshiro Mifune. At the time, Mifune was working with Kurosawa on the prep for what became *Dersu Uzala*. My experience was limited to a few weeks of that prep. Instead, Mifune opted not to do the film and continued on a tv series his company was producing. I became part of Takao Saito's camera crew. Saito was Kurosawa's DP having shot *Red Beard*, etc. The strongest influences on me came from Saito and his professional approach and artistic sensitivity. Saito taught me to see.

What was it like working with Richard Lynch in The Sword and the Sorcerer*?*
It was wonderful and inspiring. Richard was intensely creative. He literally spilled over with ideas everyday. He worked hard to make each scene the best it could be. Richard remains one of the most focused and professional actors I have ever worked with. A very gifted, courageous artist. *The Sword and the Sorcerer* was actually a quite difficult shoot and I was tempted to quit and was threatened with being fired throughout. Richard and Lee Horsley were instrumental in supporting me.

In a number of your movies, there's a character named Brick Bardo — for example Dollman *or that kickboxer guy in* Bloodmatch. *Why?*
Brick Bardo was the stage name of a cameraman named Joe Bardo. Joe was instrumental in my early career and it's in homage to Joe that I used the name. Plus, I just loved the sound of the name: *Brick Bardo*. It has the late fifties, early sixties ring, like Tab Hunter or Rock Hudson. As a character, Brick Bardo made his first appearance as a fifties greaser in *Radioactive Dreams*, a film I made in 1984.

Why do so many of your films feature cyborgs? Was Blade Runner *a big influence?*
Hmmm. Good question. Not sure. It wasn't a conscious decision. I think the attraction was it enabled me to explore the question of 'what is human?' within the context of a commercial action film. It probably created some

degree of conflict in that it made the action film a little too offbeat and muddled. As an exploration of the human condition, the questions were lost in the demands of an action film. I always tried to give the cyborgs some longing to discover who they were, why they existed and what meaning their existence had as they fought, burned and kickboxed [laughs].

Nemesis *is an amazing movie, my favourite of yours. Did you storyboard the action scenes? How do you usually work?*
No storyboards. Ever. I work pretty organically. I just go where my impulses lead and mostly where the budget and time limitations dictate! I have always called my style of filmmaking "evolutionary filmmaking." I take the limits of budget and time and try to stretch both to fit my vision. I don't try to fight the limitations. Instead I flow with them. The only film where I feel my style met with utter failure is *Ticker*. I just couldn't overcome the funding for the production budget (less than $600,000) and the schedule (eleven shoot days). I've done films on shorter schedules and smaller production budgets, but the companies and personalities involved really beat me up. For instance, *Post Mortem* with Charlie Sheen was shot in nine days and *Deceit* was shot in three days and I was satisfied with the creative outcome of each. Charlie really made *Post Mortem* the success it was with his talent and heroism. He worked only six days and had to do eighteen to twenty pages and fifteen to sixteen scenes per day! Wow!

With regards to *Nemesis*, it was originally conceived with a female lead and I had discussions with Megan Ward (*Arcade*) to play Alex. I even did a photoshoot with Megan made up as the character. Those stills convinced Ash Shah at Imperial Entertainment that *Nemesis* could be a success. But Imperial had a French kickboxer under contract that they were trying to develop into the next Van Damme. So in exchange for the financing, Alex became a male and, because of the French kickboxer's limited command of English, the script underwent an extreme rewrite. The story suffered, but I had a great stuntman in Bob Brown and a daring DP in George Mooradian. Those two added punch via the action.

I did *Nemesis 2* with a female lead, but I was never able to capture what the original could've been. In 1998, I did begin work on a 2. 0 upgrade of the original film where we used digital effects to remake the original shots

to a greater production level. My company, Filmwerks Digital, got as far as twenty minutes completed before Imperial Entertainment and their principal backer, Scanbox, went bankrupt. By the way, did you notice Thomas Jane in, I think it was his first — or close to first — film role? Even then it was evident he was going to be a great actor and star.

You've worked several times with Tim Thomerson and Nicholas Guest. Is it easier to work with actors you've used before?
Yes, especially on the tight schedules and budgets I am usually given. You get much more in the way of performance and quality of a scene working with actors you have a history with. Both Tim and Nick are wonderfully imaginative and bring so much to every role they do. I've worked a lot with very experienced and gifted stage actors as well, such as Norbert Weisser, Scott Paulin and the late Brion James. I've really been very lucky with the actors I've been fortunate to work with. From Teri Hatcher (*Brainsmasher*) to Rutger Hauer and Christopher Lambert. Each has been a wonderful creative collaborator and have been supportive despite the limitations of budget and time. For instance, on *Knights*, Kris Kristofferson worked as a grip helping the small crew in difficult locations and drove the actors' van to and from location. Amazing man and artist.

My current production of HP Lovecraft's *Cool Air* has enabled me to work with actress Wendy Phillips. It was one of my dreams to collaborate with Wendy. Her talent and energy has made *Cool Air* a very special film. Also, I've been lucky to discover a DP who will be the next hot cinematographer... James Hagopian. What an eye!

Which one of your movies is your favourite and why?
Probably my most perfectly realised pictures have been *Mean Guns*, *Deceit*, *Brainsmasher* and *Down Twisted*. I love those four because I was able to get so close to my vision of how I wanted to tell those stories. The difficulty I've had is generally my ambition for the films far exceeded the budget and schedule. But on those four films I had proper funding and the creative freedom to do my best work. I owe a lot to Steve Friedman, the head of Kings Road who passed away in 1986; and Ash Shah, my friend and fellow anarchist. Steve produced *The Last Picture Show* and *The Big Easy* amongst

many other great pictures. I learned a lot from Steve. With Ash it was like I had found a kindred soul. Ash ran production for Imperial Entertainment and now heads Silver Nitrate Entertainment. I hope everyone who judges my body of work is able to view those four films. My best and proudest work.

By the way, *Deceit* was shot while I was doing reshoot pick ups for *Cyborg*. The film I had turned in was a heavy metal, headbanger's adventure film. Very dark. Very pessimistic. The Cannon execs and Van Damme (via his crony Sheldon Lettich) decided the film should go in another direction. A reshoot was mandated. I was so unhappy about what was occurring I conceived the idea of doing a small film. I used the reshoot to mount this small picture. I selected the *Cyborg* shoot locations to match what I needed to shoot *Deceit*. Then I arranged with the crew to pre-rig and pre-light the *Cyborg* shots so they could later be used for *Deceit*. The crew kept mum as did the equipment companies. There were times when Van Damme and his crony Lettich wondered about the strange choice of shooting location and rigging. Luckily, no one guessed we were prepping and shooting another entire film. The night after we wrapped the *Cyborg* shoot (conveniently on a Thursday), we began shooting *Deceit* over the weekend. The camera, lights, etc. were wrapped and returned on Monday and no one was the wiser. The film cost $22,000. It was shot with only one take for each shot because I had less than 13,000 feet of film and the final film was 10,000 feet long. No margin for error and the actors were perfect. I later sold *Deceit* to Menahem Golan and I have found it in video stores from Switzerland to Hong Kong.

About Dollman*: was it complicated to shoot considering the main character was supposed to be tiny and you had to keep in mind the effects at all times?*

What was difficult was the lack of budget. Charlie Band did everything on a shoestring back then, so most of the effects and 'cheats' took real ingenuity and preparation. We really needed to have the film properly funded to actualise the concept in a real way. Charlie's a very nice man, but the severe budget challenges were too much, even for a twelve day shoot schedule. For instance, one time the crew hadn't been paid and in order to keep it going, cash showed up on set at lunch. It was that tight. A very tense shoot with many disgruntled crew. Great cast though, with Seth Green, Peter

Billingsley, John De Lancie and Don being real pleasures. Another difficult matter was that Charlie and I had some creative differences on the project, which I shot back to back with *Arcade*. I think the budget for both was less than $700,000. Charlie originally imagined *Dollman* as a shrunken scientist fighting insects like the Disney film starring Rick Moranis. I had a different take. A grittier noir comedy built on a shrunken tough cop. It was my tagline that sold Charlie: "Thirteen inches with an attitude."

It must have been a trip working with Steven Seagal and Dennis Hopper together in Ticker*? Tell me about that experience.*
Well… there's a book there! To take personalities like Seagal, Tom Sizemore, Hopper, Nas, Chilli and Jaime Pressly and then try to do an action film in ten days with only $600,000. Wow. Now that was an insane decision. One of my worst. I have to say that the actors, including Seagal, did try hard. It was just doomed from the start by bickering between the US distributor and the foreign distributor. Hopper was great in the one day he worked. Sizemore was a total pro as well.

Seagal worked six days of the ten day shoot. And he was in that transition period from being a theatrical star to falling to the video bins. A tough drop for any actor, but more so to someone like Steven who has been dogged by insecurities, I think. On top of everything else, I caught a bad case of flu at the start of the shoot and it hampered me as much as the severe time and budget limitations. By the way, Seagal actually helped me recover by giving me herbs and medicine. In a lot of ways, Steven is a kind and caring man. But he has a self destructive streak. I guess many of us do. The film was a financial success. The second most profitable film after *The Blair Witch Project* for Artisan and winner of the 2002 VSDA Independent Direct to Video Film of the Year Award. Steven and I almost did a film called *Overkillers* for Sony in 2001. It was set in fifteenth century China and Steven had even met with Zhang Zi Yi about doing the picture. But it basically fell apart after *Exit Wounds* came out and Steven believed he was once again a 'studio theatrical star. '

Cyborg *was shot using sets from the unfinished* Masters of the Universe 2. *Where you ever attached to that project?*

Cyborg was a product of what could have been a career-shifting period of my life. I knew that Cannon had the rights to *Spider-Man* and sequel rights to *Masters of the Universe*. I also knew that the *Spider-Man* rights were about to expire. I proposed to Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus that I make both pictures back to back in North Carolina (at De Laurentiis' studio in Wilmington). Cannon agreed. And I cast both pictures. I can't remember who we cast for Peter Parker, but big wave surfer Laird Hamilton was cast as He-Man (replacing Dolph Lundgren).

Brooklyn sets for *Spider-Man* were built on the Wilmington stages and I had a number of creative discussions with Stan Lee and Joe Calamari of Marvel. I had wanted to use the Black Spidey costume, but this was vetoed. The script was based on the original story only. The budget was my largest at $6 million. *Masters of the Universe 2* was based on my story. Sets and costumes were built. The film was fully cast. Mattel Toys had a great many approvals and it was a trying process getting everything okayed by the corporate giant. It had a budget of $4. 5 million. The concept was to shoot two weeks of *Spider-Man* first. The section of Peter Parker's story before he was bitten. Then we would shoot six weeks of *Masters 2*. The actor cast to play Parker would undergo a strenuous eight week workout regime supervised by a fitness professor at UCLA — Dr Eric Sternlicht — to build size and muscle mass. After shooting *Masters 2* we would resume shooting *Spider-Man*. Two weeks away from shooting, it was discovered that Cannon had bounced the rights check to Marvel, canceling the deal and it was discovered that Mattel was owed a large rights payment as well. With Cannon in deep financial straights, the negotiations with Marvel and Mattel fell apart! Remember this was 1988 and the junk bond market which had fueled Cannon's rise had collapsed.

Having spent well over $2 million on sets, costumes, and prep, Cannon was desperate to find a way to recoup their spend. I suggested we do a film that could utilise as much of what had been built and prepped and that would cost very little in addition. I wrote a first draft of what became *Cyborg* over a weekend and brought in a young actor, who wanted to be a screenwriter, to do polishes. His name was Don Michael Paul and he has gone on to write and direct *Half Past Dead* and *Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man*. I was interested in Chuck Norris to star as he was under contract to Cannon. Instead

Menahem suggested a Belgian kickboxer they had just starred in *Bloodsport*. That's how Van Damme became the lead. His accent was so thick, that we had to change the character from an over-the-hill ex-Army Ranger to what the Gibson character became. It pretty much gutted the character arc.

What I remember most from the film was exhaustion. The turnabout from prepping to shoot *Spider-Man* and *Masters 2* to writing and shooting *Cyborg* was punishing. We had to figure out ways to use what had been built and created for two different films in a short period of time. As I recall, the budget on *Cyborg* was less than $500,000, including Van Damme's salary. It was shot in twenty four days of principal. All in all, my expectations were quite low for the film's success given the mad circumstances.

What was it like working for Cannon?
Fun, exciting, a wild ride with the go-go boys as they were called. Got to interact with an eclectic mix of directors like Andrei Konchalovsky and Tobe Hooper.

And what about Full Moon? You did Arcade *and* Dollman *for them…*
I like Charlie Band. But his financial model and cookie cutter approach was a little trying. A very difficult environment and I did not enjoy my time there.

You made several movies in high definition. Do you think it's the future of filmmaking? What are the pros and cons of working with those cameras?
I think the format is great. Its only limitation is shooting in daylight (tricky) and shooting action. Great care must be taken. But it's a very liberating format that looks great if you can afford time to refine the look during the Digital Intermediate process. Both *Cool Air* and *Infection* were shot using the Sony HD process. It allowed more coverage and faster set ups.

Mean Guns *had amazing action sequences and also a lot of humour. Do you think it's important for an action movie to be also funny?*
Yes. I've always tried to include humour. How can you not, based on the crazy scenarios I was putting on film? My sensibilities are to see the humour and irony of many of the situations in my films.

Whose idea was it to use that salsa-like music in Mean Guns?
Mine. I was having dinner in a health restaurant in Redondo Beach, California. And the owner was playing mambo music. It really captured my imagination and suddenly I saw violence and mayhem done to a mambo beat. I asked the owner to borrow the CD and he gave it to me. That's how mambo got into *Mean Guns*. And I thanked the restaurant owner at the end of the film. Tony Riparetti, my long time composer/collaborator, really took the concept and made it work. One of his best scores.

I've always been big on music in films. In fact I did the first music video for The Smithereens in 1985 (Blood And Roses) and if you see *Dangerously Close*, *Down Twisted* or *Brainsmasher* you can see the strong influences music had on the pace and tenor of those pictures.

Radioactive Dreams *is my second favourite of yours. It's a pretty strange movie. What got you attracted to the project? Do you think a film like that could be made today?*
No, *Radioactive Dreams* wouldn't get made today. It's way too eccentric and weird. Even in 1984 it was tough to get made. I raised the budget myself from a single investor. He was a real estate developer in San Bernardino, California. I think he did it because he finally gave in to my dogged persistence for over a year. He said "no" many times, but I kept hearing "yes." I'm an optimist, I guess. I believed in the film and knew it would be a unique picture to follow up *The Sword and the Sorcerer*. Anyway, halfway through production the funding disappeared. It was the first of many films where funding would be shaky. As I generally raised the budgets for my pictures myself, it became a constant that independent funding was unreliable at best. I was never available as a 'work for hire' director and turned down most offers. So I knew what I was getting into with the independent financing world. I just wish they hadn't impacted the quality of the pictures so severely.

I had over 200 cast and crew on location in Hawaii when the funding vanished. I had no way of getting the cast and crew back to LA or of finishing the film. How it did get finished is a wild story. What was great about the experience is the actors I auditioned (Judge Reinhold, Clancy Brown, Eric Stoltz) and that it began a relationship with John Stockwell whom I hired to write his first screenplay [*Dangerously Close*]. John's a very successful

director now. There was a lot I enjoyed on *Radioactive Dreams*. I love the music and music montages best of all.

Captain America *was made on a low budget. What do you think of that project? I saw it in theatres here, by the way.*
Captain America was made on *no* budget. It was a wreck right from the start. The money that was supposed to fund the picture never materialised. We were dogged by unpaid bills and crew the whole way. It had a great cast though. Great actors trying their best under difficult and limited circumstances. The picture was the first of Menahem Golan's new company, 21st Century Film Corporation. This was after his split from Cannon and his partner of many years, Yoram Globus. Menahem was a very optimistic man and believed investors and bankers who told him they would fund the picture. But they conned him. There was never sufficient funding. We had enough to shoot the opening of the picture — the scene in Italy where the boy is kidnapped — in a proper fashion. The rest of the picture was hit and miss as there was literally no reliable cash flow. The producer, Tom Karnowski, would travel to countries like Bulgaria and Hungary in search of funds that we were told would be there. Sometimes he would be given $5,000. But usually there was nothing. Somehow we finished, but it was very difficult and, sadly, it ended up butchering the screenplay and production value. It was supremely disappointing after what occurred with *Spider-Man*. The original script was excellent. I know Stan and Marvel were excited as well. It's too bad we could never get it onto the screen. It's sad it has developed such a bad reputation. I tried to acquire the rights to re-do and re-release a digitally enhanced version in 2001, but MGM turned me down. I think I could really improve the film and bring it closer to what we imagined back in 1989.

ALBERT PYUN FILMOGRAPHY

as director

2010
Bulletface

2008
Road to Hell

2007
Left for Dead

2005
Cool Air
Infection

2004
Max Havoc: Curse of the Dragon

2003
More Mercy

2001
Ticker

1999
Corrupt
Urban Menace
The Wrecking Crew

1998
Postmortem
Crazy Six

1997
Mean Guns
Omega Doom
Blast

1996
Adrenalin: Fear the Rush
Nemesis III: Prey Harder
Raven Hawk

1995
Nemesis 2: Nebula
Heatseeker
Nemesis 4: Death Angel (tv)

1994
Hong Kong 97
Kickboxer 4: The Aggressor
Spitfire

1993
Brainsmasher... A Love Story
Knights
Arcade
Nemesis

1991
Dollman
Kickboxer 2: The Road Back
Captain America
Bloodmatch

1989
Cyborg/Masters of the Universe II: The Cyborg
Deceit
Journey to the Center of the Earth

1988
Alien from L. A

1987
Vicious Lips
Down Twisted

1986
Dangerously Close

1985
Radioactive Dreams

1982
The Sword and the Sorcerer

KEN RUSSELL

KEN RUSSELL IS ARGUABLY the most important living English director, as well as one of the most controversial filmmakers of all time. Often shocking, his films are also unfailingly intelligent, and always engage seriously with the topics they address. Russell grew up during World War I and always wanted to be a filmmaker, though his lifelong interests in music, literature, photography, art and even choreography constantly enrich his work. Even if he has made movies like *Mahler* or *Valentino*, they're never the kind of generic biopic commonly churned out by Hollywood (such as *A Beautiful Mind*). He's also made one of the oddest pictures to come out of Hollywood mainstream (*Altered States*), a cult rock opera (*Tommy*) and one of the strangest mixtures of genre in recent history (*Gothic*, which took real characters to tell how nightmares inspired their creations, ghosts created by their minds who wanted out). When I met him during the 2004 Mar del Plata Film Festival, he was drinking a glass of wine and, during the course of the whole interview, I didn't know if he was laughing at me, taking me seriously, or just plain nuts. Probably all at the same time…

NICANOR LORETI *you're not only interested in film, but other arts as well, such as theatre and music. Was it difficult for you to decide that you wanted to be a film director?*

KEN RUSSELL Well, I always wanted to be. When my mother was pregnant with me, she went to see *Mommy*, starring Al Jolson. "Mommy, mommy" [sings]. So I yelled "Mommy" when I was born [laughs]. She took me to all the movies in the thirties and then when I went to school I just

became a film fanatic. So I saw every movie that came out. And then my parents, when I was about eleven, gave me a projector, a toy projector and I had Charlie Chaplin films and Mickey Mouse films. These were very short films, and this particular projector was a 9. 5mm projector and the films were on a spool and had a hole in the middle so I thought I could show feature films on it. But the only films that were available in the catalogue were German expressionist films: Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, *Dr. Caligari*, *Dr. Mabuse*, etc. Then the war started and, in my parents' garage, I gave movie shows. So people came to see them. Well, I was showing German films like *Siegfried* where you see the German hero fighting the fire breathing dragon, while the sons of Siegfried were raining down fireballs. It was very ironic. I charged six pennies to the people that came to see them, and those went to the Spitfire fund to make guns to shoot down the Germans. Anyway, I showed all these movies and then Fritz Lang became one of my most important influences. Then I grew up and tried to get into movies but you had to know somebody who was already working, so for a while I did different things. I became a ballet dancer, I became an actor, I took on photography and then, once I'd learned photography, I could make my move to movies. So I did and I made some short films. The first one was called *Amelia and the Angel*, and that was the film that really put me on the map, because I showed it to the BBC, who were just starting an arts program. They were looking for a film director. They already had John Schlesinger, but he left to make features, so they gave me a chance. They liked what I did and I went on and on and made a lot of films on art for the BBC for like twelve years.

And when did you start making feature films?
Well, I started making feature films almost at the same time, and I worked between film and television. I do think tv is almost as good as film, because it reaches more people. Anyway, since feature films these days are getting harder and harder to finance, unless you have a big Hollywood star or you're a big Hollywood director, I started doing my own movies in my own studios. So I make films in the garden with my friends.

That's the way you made The Fall of the Louse of Usher…

Yes, with all my friends and people like that. It's available on DVD and it's doing pretty well. So I'm continuing to do that, although I'm working on four feature films that may never see the light of day, because it's too difficult to raise the money. In the meantime, I'll continue making films on my own. I just finished one called *The Revenge of the Elephant Man*, which is a short film for which I made the trailer, showed it on the internet and invited people to buy it. I think it's an interesting move, because the big studios are now realising how much money is to be made on DVD.

So you did all this to maintain your independence?
Well, I just did it to keep making films, because I like making films. I get lots of ideas and they don't seem to be commercial. After making *The Devils*, I wrote the screenplay for *The Angels* and I was told it wasn't commercial and all of that stuff. But, when I was about to do *Tommy*, I put all those ideas into *Tommy*. And that's commercial, they said [laughs].

You directed Altered States*, which had a troubled production. I understand Arthur Penn was supposed to do it but left.*
Well, Arthur Penn worked on it for a year and chose all the cast and couldn't get on with the producer/writer, Paddy Chayefsky, who wrote the original novel. You know, in the novel it says: "An extraordinary black force going at a million miles an hour goes through the black sky." So they had to show something black going over something black and they tried for a year to find a way to do it. I just came in and I read in the script that the hero was influenced by the Old Testament, he's a bit of a religious freak. So I knew the Old Testament and made all the hallucinations work in terms of the character. Some of them were based on Old Testament imagery. And the author didn't like it, so we went through lots of rounds and went back and forth until it was done. But what was amazing for me about that film is that we had unlimited funding. It was the only movie I've done in my life where we hadn't any budgetary problems. Everything that came into my mind was possible. There were no limits.

I saw a picture of you on the set of that movie wearing an Eraserhead *t-shirt...*

Oh, I just love *Eraserhead*, it's one of my favourite movies. Pity he [David Lynch] didn't make any as good as that.

Well, I think some of his latest movies are almost as good as that.
Yeah, I know you do. It's all right… [laughs]

The first movie of yours I saw was Gothic. *I was very young and I was never able to forget Miriam Cyr's breasts with eyes on her nipples.*
Oh, yes [laughs]. Well, that impressed me, too! But that's what it's all about. They're all on drugs, you know… But that wasn't my script. I liked the artists and had made many documentary films on different artists, so it was a nice project to be involved in, and I enjoyed making it.

Is it a different experience when it's not your script?
No, no, no… It's all the same. One of the best films I've directed, which is not seen very much is *Savage Messiah*. I think it's one of my best, although I hadn't written it. A lot of times, I've heard people say: "Let's fix this script, and then let's go shoot."

That never works?
Never works, forget it. If the script's no good, you're doomed.

When you first approached a concept as controversial as The Devils*, did you have second thoughts about it before starting production?*
No, never. I had two works of literature to base the script on. One was Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudon*. Have you read it? It's the greatest book, the greatest documentary work I've ever read about an incident that really happened. Have you seen *The Devils*? Well, let me tell you this, in the book it says: "The exorcism of Sister Jean was the equivalent of a rape in a public lavatory." That is a potent image, so we made the convent look like a public lavatory. So I was inspired by that and the other work is a play also called *The Devils*, I think. And I based a lot of the dialogue on that. I also should thank the wonderful production designer we had, who gave the film part of its unique look.

Ken Russell's Film
savage messiah
Every man has a dream that must be realized.
M-G-M Presents A KEN RUSSELL PRODUCTION "SAVAGE MESSIAH"
Starring DOROTHY TUTIN · SCOTT ANTONY and HELEN MIRREN
Screenplay by CHRISTOPHER LOGUE · Based on the Book by H.S. EDE
Associate Producer HARRY BENN · Produced and Directed by KEN RUSSELL
R RESTRICTED
METROCOLOR MGM

You've made a lot of films that are sort of biopics, but not completely, like Salome's Last Dance*, in which Oscar Wilde appears as a character but it's not his story.*
Salome includes real life characters, yes. But I heard that the play was banned by the English censors at the time, and the only way he could have it played was by his friends and staging it in this brothel, where the courtesans and the clients acted in it.

How important is music in your life?
Well, music is like oxygen for me. It's completely essential. My first encounter with music was when I was very young, during the Great War. England was at war, so I stayed at my mum's house like a vegetable for six months. I didn't move, I didn't care, if anything happened it didn't matter to me at all. And suddenly one day, something caught my attention. So I sat down and listened. It was magical, and changed my life, that music was something special. A voice on the radio said it was Tchaikovsky. So I took my bike and went to the nearest music store, and asked for that Tchaikovsky recording. It definitely changed my life. End of story.

I know music is also something crucial in most of your movies.
Well, Tchaikovsky was a revelation, but then I got to know other composers, like Stravinsky and modern things. All of them I loved. It was all magic for me: Shostakovich, Brahms, Ravel. And from that moment on I saw that the right use of music with the right image could create something powerful. Combined, they could create something even more emotional.

Please tell me about Women in Love.
Well, *Women in Love* is based on a very well known British novel and I wanted to be as respectful as possible with it. But to be true to it I had to do whatever I wanted, and part of it was including this nude fight between two men. So that would bring us trouble with the censors. I shot this male nude scene under the moonlight. And this man came into the water, out of the shadows. It was a very poetic image. So we had Oliver Reed and this other man naked fighting in the water, and the censors thought it could be misunderstood. So what they did, and this is very funny, was they left some footage of them talking, they

cut the fight and then they showed them both lying on the ground naked. So you could still see them naked, but you didn't understand what just happened. And if you see two men talking, and the next thing you see is both of them lying on the ground naked, I think you're going to get the wrong idea. It's not that I have any problem with that, but I still can't understand what they were thinking. Anyway, that's the way showbusiness is.

Were any of your films truly difficult to shoot?
Generally, I worked with very intelligent people, so I didn't have too many problems getting them to understand what I wanted them to do. They would read the script, we would talk about the characters and that was it. In *Women in Love*, for example, the characters are so well written by Lawrence that you don't need anything else to bring them to the screen. Anyway, I came to the conclusion that the less you say to the actors, the less problems you're gonna have and it will make it easier for everyone. However, take for example an actor like Oliver Reed, whom I worked with many times on lots of made for television drama documentaries I made on Debussy, etc. , and of course I did *Women in Love* with him and *The Devils*. Working with him was so simple. We just understood each other. So, we worked on a simple fact: depending on the emotion required, he would say: "What is it you want, Ken? Moody one, moody two or moody three?" So I would say, for instance, "moody two," and he would go down and do it right down to the last line! With the exact emotion. And also when I worked with Glenda Jackson, who had a very emotional scene as the queen in *Salome's Last Dance*. She had the most difficult speech, and the most difficult part in terms of acting that I ever called a woman to do. I knew we were gonna do this the first thing after lunch. I knocked on her door, I went in and said: "Glenda, are you prepared for your great speech?" And Glenda was chewing gum, smoking a cigarette, listening to jazz and reading a woman's magazine. She asked: "What are we doing, Ken?" I said: "Your great scene." And she said: "Ok, I'm fine, let's go." She threw away the gum, the cigarette, came out and did the greatest scene of her life!

That's the way to do it!
Yeah. I don't how other directors work, because I've only been in two other films where I've acted so I don't have any idea how other directors work.

I really think that with most actors, it's a question of telepathy. And it's a question also, of the director knowing what he's doing. He doesn't say: "Well, what should we do now?" He says [yells]: "You stand there, you pick up that glass, you walk across and you drink it! Ha!" They like that… They think they know what they're doing. They don't have to think of anything but their part. They don't have to think: "What's that actor doing or this actor. Seems to be OK. Pick up the glass, drink it [laughs]!"

What are your projects right now? You seem to be outside of the Hollywood mainstream.
Well, I have four producers at the moment, and I'm working on four films. None of them will probably happen because money is not easy to raise these days unless you have a big Hollywood star. Hollywood's Hollywood, and that's because other countries like England are parochial, and only make movies that are for a limited audience. And although I hate to say it Hollywood films are made for the whole world to understand. They speak to a worldwide audience. There are a lot of English films about the English scene and they're fairly interesting to English people. And they're not dynamic enough, they're not exciting enough. But Americans know how to do it. Well, we have to give them credit for that. They make bloody good films. One in particular I've seen lately is *Master and Commander*, in that film the special effects are excellent and mind blowingly imaginative. And wonderfully contribute to the excitement of a film that shows what it was to be on the crew of a ship 150 years ago.

What about Valentino*? Why did you choose Rudolph Nureyev for the lead?*
Well, I think he was miscast in the film, and we should have had someone else. Valentino spoke little English and had a very big accent, but it wasn't a Russian accent. At the time, Nureyev was the man with the most expressive body in the world, but he had this obsession that he had to talk. One time, I cut a part of his speech and he became so angry it became a real problem. He wanted to talk no matter what.

Of all the actors you've worked with, which ones did you like the most?

Well, they all gave good performances, but everybody has to be handled differently. I think Kathleen Turner is a great actress and after she agreed to do what I think is one of her finest performances, in *Crimes of Passion*, she hesitated. She had just made the film that had made her famous, which was *Romancing the Stone* [Robert Zemeckis], in which she played this writer. So she had become this writer woman, and really believed she was her. She thought: "How am I gonna play this disgusting prostitute in a film like *Crimes of Passion*? I'm not gonna do it!" [laughs]. Fortunately, the production company said: "We'll sue the pants out of you" — so she agreed to do it. And after having done it, she thought it was her greatest movie.

Lisztomania *and* Tommy *were very influential movies. Why did you choose to do those kinds of films?*
To be truly honest, I hate rock. I think The Who are a very special band. And I think the story of *Tommy* is worthy to go along with The Beatles and Puccini, but there's no one else who could have done it.

How do you manage to shoot those kinds of choreographies in your films and documentaries?
First of all, you have to be a choreographer. I think one of the best films I've ever seen with choreography is *The Red Shoes*. Anyway, shooting ballet on film is not easy. I remember one producer, who had made some James Bond films, he told me, "Dancers on film never made money" [laughs] and I think he was right. An exception is of course *Chicago*, in which the choreography and the music go hand in hand, but that's a rare case.

KEN RUSSELL FILMOGRAPHY

as director

2006
Trapped Ashes (segment: The Girl with the Golden Breasts)
Sarah Brightman: Diva

2004
The Revenge of the Elephant Man
Charged: The Life of Nikola Tesla

2002
Elgar: Fantasy of a Composer on a Bicycle (tv)
The Fall of the Louse of Usher

2000
Lion's Mouth

1998
Dogboys (tv)

1997
Ken Russell 'In Search of the English Folk Song'

1996
Tales of Erotica (segment: The Insatiable Mrs. Kirsch)
Mindbender

1995
Alice in Russialand (tv)
Classic Widows (tv)

1993
The Insatiable Mrs Kirsch
The Mystery of Dr Martinu (tv)

1992
Lady Chatterley (tv)
The Secret Life of Arnold Bax (tv)

1991
Prisoner of Honour (tv)
Whore

1990
The Strange Affliction of Anton Bruckner (tv)
Women and Men: Stories of Seduction (tv)

1989
A British Picture (tv)
Méphistophélès (tv)
The Rainbow

1988
The Lair of the White Worm
Salome's Last Dance

1987
Aria (segment: Nessun Dorma)

1986
Gothic
Ralph Vaughan Williams (tv)

1984
Crimes of Passion
The Planets (tv)

1980
Altered States

1978
Clouds of Glory: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (tv)
Clouds of Glory: William and Dorothy (tv)

1977
Valentino

1975
Lisztomania
Tommy

1974
Mahler

1972
Savage Messiah

1971
The Boy Friend
The Devils
The Music Lovers

1970
Dance of the Seven Veils (tv)

1969
Women in Love

1968
Song of Summer (tv)

1967
Dante's Inferno (tv)
Billion Dollar Brain

1957
Amelia and the Angel

CLAUDIO SIMONETTI

IF YOU'VE SEEN Dario Argento classics like *Deep Red* or *Suspiria*, then you're already familiar with Claudio Simonetti's work as a composer/musician. If you love those films, then you're probably a fan like me. Simonetti's music (and Goblin's, the band he was part of while composing for Argento during the seventies) is amongst the most distinctive in horror film history. His style is both unique and baroque, classical and pop; his work with Goblin and as a solo artist have been equally influential, changing movie music forever. Few people know that Claudio isn't exactly Italian, or that he is influenced by music as diverse as Bach and black metal. Simonetti has worked with filmmakers such as Ruggero Deodato, Enzo G. Castellari and George Romero, and his love of film and music is obvious when you hear him speak. A big fan of progressive rock, Simonetti recognises the influence of Keith Emerson (of Emerson Lake and Palmer) in his work — it's no coincidence that Emerson worked for Argento, too. Nowadays, Simonetti spends his time on his solo material and with his new band Daemonia.

NICANOR LORETI *I understand you were born in Brazil.*
CLAUDIO SIMONETTI I was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil. My father, who's Italian, worked over there for fifteen years. I was born and lived there for twelve years and then we moved to Italy, where I've lived ever since.

When did you start getting intersted in music? Was it in Brazil?
I started studying piano when I was eight years old and I kept on studying until I got to Italy, where I went to the conservatory in Santa Cecilia, Rome.

Were you always interested in making music for films? Did you ever think about classical composition, for instance?
At the beginning I studied only classical music, but at the same time I was playing in a band. While I studied at the conservatory, I used to play with underground rock bands. So I began to dig rock more and more while touring. I played with several bands until we started Goblin.

Which classical composers influenced your work?
Oh, there are so many. Probably Bach, who's one of my favourite composers of all time. Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Mozart. There are obviously more but the list is enormous...

And what about rock bands?
I was obviously influenced by people like Keith Emerson, from Emerson, Lake & Palmer, and bands like Yes, King Crimson, Genesis, Deep Purple, almost all the progressive rock of the seventies. My first band was called The Picture of Dorian Gray and we started playing at that time. We used to do covers of those bands.

How did Goblin come together?
After playing with several bands, I met my friend Massimo Morante, the guitar player. After the military, where I had to serve for fifteen months in Rome, I spent some time at a studio composing and created an album with Massimo. To record that album we dcided to call Fabio Pignatelli, the bass player of Goblin and Carlo Porsini, who was our first drummer. So we lived in London for almost a year and even had an American singer. We recorded several demos in London and when we came back to Italy we were sponsored by my father, who was a very popular musician over there. Obviously, his work had a very big influence on mine. He helped us find a record company who would be interested in our material. And it was during the recording of our album that we met Dario Argento for the first time. That record was distributed using our first name, Cherry Five. I don't know why they changed it because it wasn't the band's real name. At the time, Dario was looking for a band to record the music for *Profondo Rosso* (*Deep Red*). He liked our music so much that he asked us to write the soundtrack for the film. Right after

that we formed a band with Walter Martino, the original drummer from my first band, The Picture of Dorian Gray, and we named it Goblin. Then we recorded the *Profondo Rosso* soundtrack. To tell you the truth we started doing it just to record soundtracks, we never thought we could be successful. But we realised it was serious business when we sold a million copies in just eleven months. It's one of the best selling albums in Italian music ever. It was on the charts for fifteen weeks and we even got a gold record for it.

You could have retired back then [laughs]!
Yes, it's true. And what's more impressive is that at the time Italian people didn't listen to that kind of music. They liked pop and commercial stuff. And when we recorded *Profondo Rosso*, it was something revolutionary, no one had ever heard something like that before. It also helped a lot that the movie was a big success in our country. I think it's Dario's most successful movie.

Even more than Suspiria*?*
Yes. Even if in the rest of the world *Suspiria* is better known, in Italy the most famous is *Profondo Rosso*. But *Suspiria's* popularity is awesome. In Japan, *Profondo Rosso* opened after *Suspiria* and they called it *Suspiria 2*. Wherever I travel to play with my band, I discover *Suspiria* is Dario's most popular film.

Do you think Goblin changed the way that film music is written in Italy?
Yes, I do. And I think it wasn't just in Italy. A lot of thriller and horror film directors and composers copied our style or were influenced by it in other countries.

John Carpenter, for example.
Of course, John Carpenter was very influenced by *Profondo Rosso* in his soundtrack for *Halloween*. Everyone knows he's a big Goblin fan. We changed the way to make music for this kind of film.

How would you describe the writing process for a Goblin album?
We really didn't have many clichés or routines. Every job was very different than the one before, as all the movies were so different. What we did was

start composing after watching the movie, and after that we played while watching it. But beyond that there weren't many things in common every time. Sometimes one of us would have a great idea, some other times it was another one of us. Obviously, it's the director's job to tell you what he wants to get out of you. But we never had any problems with anyone because once we knew what we wanted, everyone used to let us work the way we wanted.

What are the main differences between working alone and with Goblin?
With Goblin, we had a very particular relationship. At the beginning we played together because we were together all the time. It was all we did. But after we started working by ourselves and outside the band, things changed. When we tried to work together again it was very difficult because I was used to working alone. It's very strange to work with other people on a composer's level. It was complicated, especially when we did *Non Ho Sonno* (*Sleepless*). It had been twenty five years since the last time and things were very different. We couldn't start playing like we had met the day before. We liked different styles and it was difficult to agree sometimes.

When you formed Daemonia the first thing you did was cover classic horror themes from Argento films. How did you choose those songs?
Our first album was *Dario Argento Tribute*, and consisted of themes from his films that I liked the most. In the second album, *Live... or Dead* we also included the original theme from *Halloween* and also some other themes from horror films. We also included a song my father wrote for a sci fi movie. There aren't too many famous horror themes besides the ones for *Psycho* or *Halloween*.

You worked with Ruggero Deodato, doing the music for his films Cut and Run (Inferno in Diretta) *and* Body Count (Camping del Terrore)*, among others...*
Ruggero is a great guy and a good friend. I did four movies with him. I always worked well with Ruggero, never had any problems. He lets me do basically anything I wanted. Maybe the director that gets involved the most in my work is Dario. Other directors don't share his interest for the music of

the movie. Ruggero wanted a good soundtrack but besides that, he let me do anything I wanted. He always liked my work.

When you work on the soundtrack of a film like Cut and Run*, which was severely cut for the American market, do you have to do an alternate soundtrack? Did they ever ask you to do that?*
No, I only wrote the music for the uncut version, which came out on DVD via Anchor Bay. Ruggero Deodato had to shoot very violent versions for the Japanese market, because they wanted more blood [laughs]. In other countries they want movies to be cut because they are too violent but in Japan they want more! I liked writing the soundtrack for that film a lot because it's set in the Amazon... So I got to use a lot of my Brazilian roots for that film.

That movie always reminded me of Apocalypse Now.
There are some similarities, it's true.

Even more so because of Richard Lynch's character...
I think Ruggero was somehow inspired by Coppola, it's true.

When you're working on films like Suspiria *and* Profondo Rosso*, do you feel inspired by the material because it's so good?*
Yes, of course. But it's work anyway, you know? I always try to do my best, even if the material is not as good. I think it's important that the movie is good, but not that much.

Do you think your music can improve a movie?
I don't know, I certainly hope so. Any movie is better if it has a good soundtrack. Music is very important, I think fifty or sixty per cent of the atmosphere in a film is provided by music. The soundtrack can build a film or can destroy it. It's as important as editing.

From the soundtracks you didn't write for Dario, which is the one you like the most?

Definitely *Inferno*, which was composed by Keith Emerson. He's my master, my hero, I really love his music and I really like that film, too.

Did you ever meet him?
Yes, I saw him once or twice. I met him in Rome, when I was recording the music for *Inferno*, where Fabio Pignatelli recorded bass. I then met him in London again, when we were rehearsing the songs that would later become Goblin music. We rehearsed in the same place. He's the best pianist in the world.

What was it like working on the Dawn of the Dead *soundtrack?*
That was in Rome. Dario hired us to do the job. We never heard the alternative soundtrack or even met George Romero. Anyway, it was fun writing that soundtrack, working on a zombie movie… creatively speaking. We had never written anything for a movie like that. Romero liked our version so much he later used it in the American version, too.

Is there a director you've yet to collaborate with but would like to?
Without a doubt, Brian De Palma… or Tim Burton.

Well, Pino Donaggio, who worked for Argento, did the music for several De Palma movies… maybe one day he will call you, too.
I'd love too. It would be a dream come true.

Claudio Simonetti Filmography

as composer

2008
Frat House Massacre
La morte di pietra
La llamada
The Dirt

2007
La terza madre/Mother of Tears
J. E. S.

2006
Masters of Horror (episode: Pelts, tv)

2005
Urbane
Masters of Horror (episode: Jenifer, tv)

2004
Il Cartaio/The Card Player

2002
Apri gli Occhi e... Sogna

2001
Non ho Sonno/I Can't Sleep/Sleepless

1998
The Versace Murder

1993
Vortice Mortale/The Washing Machine

1989
La Casa delle Anime Erranti/House of Lost Souls (tv)
La Casa del Sortilegio/House of Witchcraft (tv)
College (tv)

1988
Ragno Gelido/Dial Help/Love Threat
Nightmare Beach/Welcome to Spring Break

1987
Opera/Terror at the Opera
Camping del Terrore/Body Count Camping della Morte/The Eleventh Commandment

1986
Mani di Pietra/Atomic Cyborg/Fists of Steel/Return of the Terminator
Morirai a Mezzanotte/The Midnight Killer/You'll Die at Midnight

1985
Phenomena/Creepers
Demoni/Demons
Inferno in Diretta/Amazon: Savage Adventure/Cut and Run/Straight to Hell

1983
Conquest

1982
I Nuovi Barbari/The New Barbarians
Tenebre

1981
The Comoedia

1979
Squadra Antigangsters

1978
Squadra AntiMafia/Little Italy
Dawn of the Dead/Zombie/Zombi

1977
La Via della Droga
Suspiria

1976
Perché si Uccidono/Percy Is Killed

1975
Profondo rosso/Deep Red

PATRICK TATOPOULOS

THE WORK OF PATRICK TATOPOULOS is easily recognisable. If you see a movie with a huge and impressively dark production design, it probably belongs to him. Even if he started getting recognition for his work with blockbuster director Roland Emmerich (of *Stargate* and *Independence Day* fame), Tatopoulos ended up being one of the most important names in production design of the last fifteen years. His work in movies like *Dark City*, *Underworld*, *Pitch Black* (and its sequel *The Chronicles of Riddick*) is among the best of the decade. Patrick started working as an illustrator while living in Greece before taking his chances at working in the movie business in the US. Born in France, where he studied and lived during his adolescence, Tatopoulos has a different approach to his task than other production designers. He's more of an artist than a craftsman; he did the drawings you see in *Se7en* and even the impressive tattoos of the yakuza in *Showdown in Little Tokyo,* one of my favourite guilty pleasures of the nineties. He's also worked as creature designer in many of the movies he did production design for, and you can always spot his mark...

NICANOR LORETI *I know the character Nick Tatopoulos in the movie* Godzilla *was named because of you. How did this happen?*
PATRICK TATOPOULOS It was kind of a inside joke, because Roland and Dean Devlin had been working with me for years and always thought my last name was so strange. I was so happy about it because it showed how much they appreciated me.

It was because of Roland Emmerich that you first started working in Hollywood as a production designer, right?

Well, I first worked with Roland in *Stargate*, as a creature and conceptual designer, but my first job for him as a production designer was *Independence Day*. It's great working with Roland because he knows how to handle enormous productions and always has everything under control. Roland liked my work in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, where I had been a creature designer, and asked me to collaborate with him in *Stargate*.

How did you first get started in the business? Did you always think about working in films?
No. I was born in Paris, France, and I lived there until I was seventeen. I studied art in France in several places and then I moved to Greece, where I worked as an illustrator for quite some time. It was my love of movies that got me to the US. Fifteen years ago I was living in Greece, surfing, painting, etc. A friend of mine came to me and showed me an effects magazine. It hit me that people were doing all this cool stuff for the movies and thought I could do it too. I did a portfolio and went to Los Angeles. I got to LA and my portfolio was stuck in Amsterdam. I was in America for four weeks, but I had no book, spoke little English. I got my book the day before I was supposed to leave, but I had no appointments and no one could see me. The only people that opened their door to me was MakeupFX Labs. I was surprised by their work. I went back to Greece thinking that was it. A month later they called me back and said they had work for me. They helped me get started and I'll always be grateful for that.

I was surprised when I found out Underworld *had only cost $20 million, because it looks great. How did you achieve that look?*
It was mostly because of Len Wisemnan, the director. We've known each other for years, because we started working for Roland Emmerich together. He knew exactly what he wanted and that made everything easier, plus there weren't any big stars on which we would spend most of the money. We tried to make the film look really big through the production design. We made the most of the money we had available. Also, the fact that we didn't use that much CGI was very important. We used regular makeup on the werewolves and the CGI was used to make the transformation look more real.

How did you avoid creating the typical werewolves seen before in other films?
We wanted to do something new, something unique and original. We didn't want to do a type of wolf you see in every movie: the wolf suits had mechanical leg extensions and animatronic extensions. I wanted to do something more cat-like for the wolf. We all know werewolves are doglike, but I was going for something in between: adding cat-like qualities to a wolf for a more sleek look and a more agile animal. My inspiration was Rick Baker's *American Werewolf in London*. I felt the best look for the werewolf was during the transformation stage. Not the beginning or end, but the wolf somewhere in the middle. There was the wolf, somewhat scary and grotesque and that's what inspired me.

*The sequel [*Underworld: Evolution*] has twice that original's budget. Did that make things easier?*
We had more money this time around so we were able to make more spectacular scenes. Part of the story is set in the Dark Ages, so we were able to work on some interesting stuff for that. Also, we get to see Marcus, the other vampire leader, and that is something really special. The money helps make things more spectacular, but basically it's not that big of a budget by Hollywood standards.

I understand Godzilla *featured the biggest creature ever built for a movie at the time.*
Yes, it's true. We built the creature puppet and also the little Godzillas that appear at the end of the film. We created a lot of different puppets on different scales for many different scenes. You can't tell in the movie, of course.

What inspired you for the design of the new Godzilla*? It doesn't look like the one in the older movies.*
It's not a dinosaur at all. I tried to create something that was closer to a dragon than a dinosaur. It was a strange mix: it had the nose and ears of a dog, the jaw of a tiger, and human-like arms and hands.

You worked in Battlefield Earth. *What was the experience like [laughs]?*

Oh, that... I was a little slow and just got some tv work. I fell short and had the great idea to work on *Battlefield Earth* [laughs]. It killed my career completely. I realised I should not have done that, but it was too late, I guess. After that I had nothing, and finally I got work on a tv show called *Special Unit*. I had that for a year or so and it helped me get back into the business. But that's the way it is... You get somewhere, think you are grown up and just like that you are back to the beginning.

How do you work with CGI and avoid it taking over? Do you consider it just another tool?

Well, *Underworld* is a good case of CGI well used, and not abused. In preproduction, we put together a few packages of wolves that were CGI and a few that were regular physical effects so we could look at the two. I think that if CGI is the answer then that's what I go with. I'll use whatever tool works the best. Computer Generated Images can help make some effects better and create others, it's a tool and it really helps. It can only improve. When we looked at the differences, we realised the best werewolf look was going to be a physical wolf, one you could see and believe more so than something fantastic like CGI could give you.

What do you think the future of effects will be like? Will CGI dominate the market for good?

That's already happening today. There's less and less work for the physical effects teams. Some of the bigger names are seeing less work. I came to the US like fifteen years ago and it was a dream place. So much work, and now a lot of people who were working back then have disappeared. One positive thing I'm seeing is all the young directors. You would think they would be into CGI but a lot of them are going back to physical effects to achieve the realism you get from it. It's encouraging to me to see them looking at the best option. I think there will be less work for regular effects, but there will still be work.

PATRICK TATOPOULOS FILMOGRAPHY

production and/or creature designer

2009
Solomon Kane
Town Creek

2008
Trick 'r Treat
Outlander
The Ruins
10,000 BC (uncredited)

2007
I Am Legend

2006
Outlander
Silent Hill
Underworld: Evolution
Eragon (dragon concept only)

2005
Silent Hill (also creatures and special makeup effects creator)

2005
The Cave (also creature and special makeup designer)
Cursed (uncredited)

2004
I, Robot
Aliens vs. Predator (visual consultant only)
The Librarian: Quest for the Spear (conceptual artist only)

2003
Underworld

2002
They
Saint Sinner (tv)

2001
Special Unit 2 (tv series)

2000
Battlefield Earth: A Saga of the Year 3000
Pitch Black
Supernova (creature designer and special makeup effects only)

1999
Stuart Little

1998
Godzilla

1996
Independence Day
Lawnmower Man 2: Beyond Cyberspace (conceptual artist only)

1995
Se7en (illustrator only)
Jade (production illustrator only)

1994
Stargate

1993
Super Mario Bros.

1991
The Doors (conceptual designer/illustrator only)

ANTHONY TAYLOR

ANTHONY TAYLOR is not a big shot Hollywood producer. He did, however, produce *Incubus*, the only horror film spoken in Esperanto. Starring William Shatner and directed by *Outer Limits* auteur Leslie Stevens, *Incubus* is an unheralded expressionist masterpiece. Not only is the movie one of a kind, it also features cinematography by Oscar winner Conrad Hall, one of the greatest cinematographers of all time. Thought to be lost for more than thirty years, *Incubus* resurfaced some years ago, and started being screened at film festivals around the world, eventually receiving an impressive new DVD edition. The film is allegedly cursed: Stevens never had a hit afterwards, two of the actors died in bizarre circumstances and Taylor himself never produced another film; only Shatner seems to have escaped it. But *Incubus* lives on, and has developed a cult status that led to David S. Goyer including a clip of the film in *Blade Trinity*, the second sequel to big box office hit *Blade*. In this interview, Taylor tells us how he and Stevens managed to make one of the strangest films in movie history.

NICANOR LORETI *How did you get William Shatner to star in* Incubus*?*
ANTHONY TAYLOR Shatner had worked with Leslie Stevens on the *Outer Limits* series and we both knew and liked him personally.

Why did you decide to shoot the movie in Big Sur?
It had the quality we were looking for: a beautiful rugged coast, stark, remote, no people to hamper the shoot.

When did you find out there was a surviving copy of the film, long thought to be lost?

My longtime friend and agent Howard Rubin was on vacation in Paris and heard that Cinémathèque française had a copy of *Incubus* they had been running in their theatre. I had sued Consolidated Film Industries several years before for losing all my material negatives-prints etc. They settled out of court. CFI had looked all over for material so we were amazed that there was a print in France. It had been a big hit in France and nowhere else when it was first released in 1966. I thought it would be easy to borrow the print but the International Association of Film Archives will not do that. A member of the Association in your area has to borrow the film for you. In Los Angeles neither the American Film Institute nor the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences would help. They didn't refuse right away but jerked me around for months. Finally I contacted the only other member: the University of California at Los Angeles Film Archives. They immediately faxed Paris, and Cinematheque agreed to lend me the print, but all the work must be done in Paris. Very expensive and I don't speak French and had no money to travel so I had to do all the work by fax. I thought we could easily make a digital copy but the film had deteriorated badly and the sprocket holes were ruined, so the lab in France had to do a frame by frame optical print. When it was finished French customs did not want to allow it to leave the country, as films in their national archives are considered a national treasure. Finally FedEx delivered a large box with all the 35mm film and separate sound tracks. I live about four hours from Los Angeles so my drive down there was filled with apprehension. I hadn't seen the film in thirty five years and had no idea what kind of work the lab had done or if the sound even matched my film. So I settled in my seat at 4MC Lab to watch and try to sync up the sound and it wasn't too bad. We used a Telecine process to clean up the picture and lots more technical stuff I won't bore you with. But Conrad Hall's work looks great, I think.

Incubus *was a small production, right? How much did it cost to make?*

It cost about $100,000. Perhaps a million in today's money. I had been a member of several Commodity Exchanges and had a trading firm. I sold

my memberships and used my own money. The absolute worst thing for a producer to do, but I had faith.

It would be interesting to see a stage production of the story. Have you ever thought of that?
Interesting that you would mention the idea of a stage production: Leslie originally wrote for the stage and had two hits on Broadway before coming to Hollywood: *The Marriage Go Round* and *Bullfight*. We discussed the idea and it's never too late.

How did you get Leslie to do the film? What was the original genesis for the project?
I had the idea to do an indie movie and came to him. He first wrote a comedy script which neither of us liked, so we talked about horror and he wrote the script specifically for the locations we had scouted.

How did you guys get Conrad Hall to be cinematographer on Incubus*?*
Conrad Hall was great then. He had also worked with Leslie and had gone to the University of Southern California with me. Actually Bill Fraker only did the last scene with the goat, which looks a bit different from the rest of the shots. We did it last after we returned from Big Sur. Leslie was wrong, Bill has been nominated I think five times but never won an Oscar. Chuck Rosher was Conrad's assistant. He also went on to be DP on some big movies. His father was one of the most famous cameramen from silent film days into talkies, Mary Pickford's favourite.

Did the actors study Esperanto?
They didn't actually study it but we had rehearsals and run through with an Esperanto speaker.

What did the crew think of the film when they got to see it?
The ones who saw it loved it. Sadly, I don't think Milos or Ann lived to see their work.

Did all the scandal and tragedy surrounding the film help sales?

It was a very different time. Scandal and tragedy were something to be avoided. Today, it is very different. If *Incubus* had done as well when we made it as it has done recently, my life would have been very different I imagine.

Where did the movie actually open?
In France only. There were no videos then.

When did you find out it was lost? Did you ever try to get your copies back?
In the nineties I decided to check with CFI about the negatives and other materials stored there and found they had lost or destroyed everything.

Don't you think the film was too experimental and ahead of its time to be successful back then?
No question it was very much ahead of its time. People today, particularly young people, have seen lots of film and are open to new viewing experiences. They are the biggest audiences and love the idea of sound setting a mood.

Is it true that it was about to be screened in Argentina once?
A distributor from Argentina was at the San Francisco Film Festival and loved the film. He called me in Los Angeles and told me he would like to distribute it in Argentina and have me and the film come to your country — which I have always wanted to visit — for the festival. I agreed to his proposal and we even went to the office of the Argentine Consulate, as he wanted to sign the contract there. That was the last I ever heard from him. This happens often in the movie business and certainly is no reflection on your country's business practices it was thirty five years ago anyway. Just another example of the curse.

ANTHONY TAYLOR FILMOGRAPHY

as producer

1966
Incubus

SHINYA TSUKAMOTO

By Nicanor Loreti and Javier Diment

SHINYA TSUKAMOTO IS ONE of the most extreme and influential filmmakers of our era. He's also one of the godfathers of the new generation of Japanese cinema. His breakthrough film, *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, is a masterpiece of flesh and iron that's so frenetic it's impossible to forget. Every Tsukamoto film is a new experience and they're all worth watching. Even movies he did for hire, like *Gemini*, have a lot of style and don't compromise his vision. Sixteen years after *Tetsuo*, Tsukamoto's films keep on surprising and his unique vision continues to develop and mutate. Filmmakers like Darren Aronofsky and Jan Kounen have long declared that Tsukamoto has been a big influence both visually and thematically, and recently he has been collecting the wider respect he deserves. *Vital*, his latest film, is a real surprise and gets him as close to a regular drama as he's ever been. The stark and beautiful imagery puts similar efforts to shame, and it would have been almost impossible to guess it was directed by the same guy who did *Tetsuo*.

Director, writer, cinematographer, editor and often also the main actor and cameraman of his films, this man's talent is unique and it was cool to see what a great guy he was in real life. Polite, a little shy, but impressively bright, you couldn't even begin to understand how it was he had a dark side potent enough to make his films, or even star in Takashi Miike's *Ichi the Killer* and Shimizu's *Marebito*.

NICANOR LORETI & JAVIER DIMENT *What's the relationship between pain and pleasure in your movies? The characters are always going through very painful situations in order to get what they want.*
SHINYA TSUKAMOTO Well, I believe there's a very strong relationship between both, because of the way modern society is. Obviously, I don't exactly like pain. I'm afraid of it. But it is through pain that we realise we're alive. In Tokyo, people live in buildings and communicate with each other using their computers, so there's a loss of the way we used to communicate. Everything's changed. And people don't need their bodies anymore in order to do this. To communicate with the computer, all you need is your brain and the machine, the body is not useful anymore. So you forget you're alive, like you're trapped in a dream. And in a dream, you don't feel real pain. So, in order to remember what it is to be alive and wake up from that dream, pain helps us. When you squeeze your skin like this, and you feel pain, then you're sure you're alive. There's no doubt about it. Even in *Tetsuo*, there's a lot of pain involved, because if metal starts coming out of your skin, it would be obviously painful.

That's why the characters in Tokyo Fist *start fighting?*
Exactly. My movies try to show a way to escape from the life in a big city and the alienation. In *Tokyo Fist*, the main character starts fighting because he's forgotten what it felt to live, so he fights this other man and the woman and suddenly they are all alive. She goes through a lot of pain to become stronger, for example…

Can you think of other films and directors that influenced you to talk about these particular subjects in your movies?
Not really, I don't believe there are other directors or films that refer to these themes in their films. Not like I do, at least.

You don't see any relation between your movies and seventies directors like Wakamatsu, who did films about sexual exploitation and politics, pain and pleasure?
Even if we both talk about pain and pleasure, we have completely different styles and approach those subjects from different points of view. Our take on

pain and pleasure and the relationship between both is so different because we belong to completely different generations. In the sixties and seventies, there were many revolts and street fights in Japan; people used to go out and protest in the streets, they fought the government. Nowadays, it's completely the opposite. So our view of the world is not the same.

In the endings of A Snake of June *and* Vital*, one can see that the characters find love in the end of all that pain. Why?*
Oh, that's a very good and important question, but very hard to describe [laughs]! In Japanese, it would be simple to explain, but in English... oh, my God. Let's say pain is a very important thing in my films, like I just explained.

Do you think there are other ways to wake up from that 'dream'?
Well, maybe there are, but in my films I want to show very extreme ways. So I choose pain. I want my movies to be extreme, because otherwise people might not notice them or hear what I want to say. Extreme ways are easier to understand. As I said, there might be another way, but so far I couldn't find it. Also, pain is a symbol in my movies; it has nothing to do with what happens in real life. Real life pain is much more subtle. It's just a way to talk about something else.

Are all the women in Tokyo as you present them in your films [laughs]?
Well, women are strange creatures. My relationship with women has changed a lot through the years. In time, I've gotten closer to all the women around me, and I've gotten to understand how impressive it is that they can carry a life inside of them for nine months. I also got to know that women are more intelligent than men. Men are strong, but women can use men for what they want. They can convince you and deceive you in order to get what they want. That's something men can never do. And that's what usually happens during my films. Men seem to be stronger but the ones who are really strong are the women. That's what happens in *Tokyo Fist* and *A Snake of June*, for example. I see men as flies flying towards the women [laughs]. Like I said, the girls pretend to be weak, but just to get what they want. They are brighter and stronger than men. I can't help but putting that honest idea on film:

it will appear whether I want it or not. However, my movies show women fighting to get the strength to be themselves, so they look vulnerable and strong at the same time.

You usually do the camerawork, cinematography, editing and often even star in your movies. Don't you trust anyone else to do it?
It's not exactly like that. When I started shooting, I did it with a Super 8mm camera that I had and there was no crew, just myself, so I used to do everything by myself and got used to do it like that. When I became a filmmaker, I liked doing everything, so I kept on working that way. I love to direct, but I also love to shoot and edit my own films, so my vision gets as close to what I want as possible. That way, there's no one to blame but myself for what ends up on the screen.

And what happens when you're starring in a movie, like in the case of Tokyo Fist*?*
Well, it's exactly the same process. The only thing that changes is that I have a cameraman. I usually do it like this: I call the assistant director and ask him to take my place as an actor while I'm rehearsing the shot with the camera. Once I get it right, I ask the cameraman to shoot it just like that and take my place as an actor. That way, it'll be just the way I want it.

What would you say is the main theme of Tokyo Fist *besides life in the big city?*
Well, *Tokyo Fist* is also talking about the loss of pity in today's society. People can see two men beating themselves to death in a ring and actually enjoy it. Someone can die right there and no one would care. There's no clear notion between life and death. I have an image of Tokyo in my mind. It's an image of a city filled with concrete rooms, with a brain trapped inside each one.

What's the main difference for you in terms of doing your own projects and films for hire like Hiruko: The Goblin *and* Gemini*?*
In both cases I was working for someone else, a big corporation. So they tell me I must use famous actors they choose and give me an amount of time to shoot, because the actor won't have anymore time after that. In those cases

I had to shoot the films in two months. Otherwise, the main actor would walk. Also, in those cases, I don't even have time to get a role for myself because I have to work faster than usual in order to get the film finished in time. *Hiruko* was based on a very well known Japanese 'manga' — so it wasn't exactly my story and the same can be said about *Gemini*, which is based on a very popular local legend. All of my other films have a lot more to do with myself and themes that I find interesting. Except for *Vital*, which stars Tadanobu Asano — who I did *Ichi the Killer* with — who's a big star in Japan, all my other movies that were not for hire star lesser know actors and I like it that way.

In the case of Vital*, particularly, why did you choose Asano?*
Well, the main character is a student, and I'm too old for the part [laughs]!

Having your own production company, why did you accept those projects for hire in the first place?
Well, both were offered to me and seemed interesting. Besides, I personally like the *Hiruko* manga very much.

Do you see yourself as on influence for the new generation of Japanese filmmakers and people like Takashi Shimizu and Takashi Miike?
Oh, that's a complicated question. Miike is almost the same age as me, I would consider him as part of my generation. So I can't see any influence of my style in his. And Shimizu-san has a completely different style. I might have influenced him in a way of working independently and going your own way, but nothing more.

Why is it that you choose to star in some of your own films instead of getting someone else?
Well, I like acting. That's it. Sometimes I just write those roles strictly for myself to play. Some other times, they offer me some roles, like in *Marebito* and *Ichi the Killer*. But when I direct and star in a film, it's a decision I make on day one, even before we start production. I already know which part I want to play, and I plan the shooting that way.

Your style has changed a lot through the years. It has become less frenetic, without losing its visual punch. Why?
I became older, I guess [laughs]. No, really, I didn't want to keep on doing the same thing over and over again. I was really tired of being classified as "the cyberpunk director" because of *Tetsuo* and *Tetsuo II*. But I'm about to shoot *Tetsuo III*, so maybe I'm not that old after all... and they'll start calling me "cyberpunk" once again! Honestly, *Tetsuo I* and *II* and *Tokyo Fist* are very passionate and powerful films, but I didn't want to keep on doing the same thing over and over again.

Vital is a film as close to a melodrama as you've ever shot. But looking back at your filmography, one starts to see that the basic themes and stories of all your films have a lot of melodramatic touches...
Yes, that's true. But without drama and conflict you don't have a story to tell. Even in a film like *Tetsuo* there's some kind of conflict. *Vital* is about letting go and continuing with your own life. That story came to my mind in the days of the first *Tetsuo*, but I wasn't ready to shoot it right back then.

How do you see the evolution of Japanese cinema through to today's generation of filmmakers?
Well, I certainly see a big difference between our generation and the one before, the sixties generation. Considering we're the eighties generation, there's a lot more alienation in our films. Our films deal with that level of 'dream like life' that the sixties generation's films didn't show. They are really different on that level. We are used to telling stories about man and his relationship with the outside world; the hostility of today's society. The story of *Bullet Ballet* is like that, for example.

Were you ever tempted by Hollywood?
Yes, of course. After completing *Tetsuo II: The Body Hammer*, I was offered some projects in Hollywood, but none of them interested me and they weren't interested in backing up any of my own projects, giving me absolute control. However, I might shoot *Tetsuo III* with some American producers. The only way I would do a movie in America is if they let me do whatever I want, without compromising my own style. It was very difficult shooting *Tetsuo II*,

which isn't really a sequel to the first one but a different film. So I want to do something that goes back to the crazy energy of the first one.

In your first films like Tetsuo *and* Tokyo Fist*, we could see the transformation of the characters was both mental and physical, while in your last films, the change would happen only on a more extreme mental level…*
That has a lot to do with the change of pace in my films and my need to tell stories that had more to do with the soul than with the body. For example, *Vital* tells the story of a man who has to work on his dead girlfriend's body, and that helps him cope with the fact that she died. His relationship with her ghost, afterwards, has more to do with his soul than with his body. The girl he meets in medical school, Kiriko, has a much more down to earth relationship with him. Once again, she's the one who's strong and is willing to go through a lot in order to be with him. That also happens in *Bullet Ballet*, where the man who lost his wife has to get through a lot of pain in order to cope with that loss.

Your films usually have no genre. You can't say "this is a Tsukamoto drama or a Tsukamoto horror movie."
Before I make a film, I usually have an image of what I want it to be in my head. But then I have to give form to that image, bring it to life, to the real world. Therefore, this image must transform into a movie. I always try to make genre films. For example, *Tetsuo* is horror-science fiction, and I had the image in my head of what I wanted it to be: black & white, fast and furious. So it ended up being a cult film, not exactly a genre movie. *Tetsuo II* is a blend of action and sci fi, *Tokyo Fist* is my take on a boxing story, and *Bullet Ballet* is a gunfighter-action film… Of course, they are not your typical action or boxing films, but I do think of them as some kind of genre.

So A Snake of June *would be an erotic film?*
Of course, *A Snake of June* is an erotic melodrama.

SHINYA TSUKAMOTO FILMOGRAPHY

as director

2009
Tetsuo: The Bullet Man

2008
Akumu Tantei 2

2006
Akumu Tantei

2005
Haze

2005
Female/Fîmeiru

2004
Vital

2002
Rokugatsu no hebi/A Snake of June

1999
Soseiji/Gemini

1998
Bullet Ballet

1995
Tokyo Fist

1992
Testsuo II: Body Hammer

1990
Yokai Hanta-Hiruko/Hiruko the Goblin

1988
Tetsuo/Tetsuo: The Ironman

1987
Denchu Kozo no boken/ Adventures of Electric Rod Boy (short film)

1986
Futsu saizu no kaijin/The Phantom of Regular Size (short film)

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Tales from Hollywood's Exploitation A-list

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